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ABSTRACT

This monograph, the fifth in a series of publications issued since 1955, reviews current language arts literature and related research. Following an introduction which discusses language arts research as a reflection of change, separate chapters examine research in the areas of visual literacy, language development and critical thinking, foreign language instruction, English as a second language, and listening. Three chapters discuss the literature of reading research. Composition and creative writing, spelling and handwriting, and literature are the remaining areas covered. The concluding chapter looks to the future of language arts research. References appear at the end of each chapter. (FL)



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# Classroom-Relevant Research in the Language Arts

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# Foreword

PERIODIC reviews of language arts research long have been a characteristic of the publications program with which the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development seeks to serve its members. It is of interest to note that this is the fifth publication of this kind to appear in 23 years.

During an era of renewed interest in skills development, the present publication is especially timely because of its extensive substantive content and its focus on studies and writing that have direct relevance for the classroom. It also is important because of the new areas of study such as visual literacy which are introduced for the first time.

An examination of the four earlier ASCD publications which emphasized communication skills (1955, 1963, 1967, 1971) brings to mind how fortunate our Association is in being able to draw upon professional resource persons for the tasks of preparing or reviewing its publications. Their names provide a roster of educational leadership as listed in these four past publications: May Hill Arbuthnot, Jeanne Chall, Mildred Dawson, Gertrude Hildreth, William S. Gray, Gordon Mackenzie, Laura Zirbes, John I. Goodlad, Ruth Strickland, and many more. Linguists such as Albert H. Marckwardt and Sumner Ives along with James Squire and Eldonna Everetts were a few of many who helped ensure the authenticity of our 1967 review of linguistics as a new force in the language arts.

I feel that we have been fortunate, indeed, as an organization to have had the support, the dedication, and the talent of friends such as these both within and from outside the ranks of our membership in ASCD.

Because of the timeliness and relevancy of the content, I enthusiastically recommend that every teacher and professor of language arts, supervisor, director, principal, and superintendent read this new edition. It is a valuable reference on the latest in language research and indicates direction in improving instructional programs to ensure quality learning in the language arts.

DONALD R. FROST, *President, 1978-79*
*Association for Supervision and*
*Curriculum Development*

# Acknowledgments

IN A world sorely beset by problems, it is important to bear in mind that our planet will continue to provide a benign home for humans only if we can more fully accept both our individual and our shared responsibility for the general welfare. This concern must be reflected in policies that do not serve the interests of some while ignoring the rights of others.

Of great importance in a mutual attack on the present crisis of crises is skill in communicating effectively with one another. We need to know how to speak clearly, to write lucidly, to listen intelligently, and to recognize the power of language for good or for evil as words are used to explain or heal, to mislead or harm. In fine, there is an even greater need for teachers to understand communication skills than was the case nearly a quarter-century ago when the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development distributed the first of its five publications directly concerned with language development and research in the language arts.

I had the privilege of preparing that first manuscript with the cooperation of some of the most distinguished specialists of the era; Roma Gans, Leland Jacobs, Helen Robinson, Ruth Strickland, and Viola Theman among them. Now the fifth review of classroom-relevant research appears, and James Walden and I have the opportunity to acknowledge the help of a variety of new contributors to this 1978 résumé of significant studies that have surfaced since he and I, with Ronald Green, coordinated *Interpreting Language Arts Research for the Teacher* in 1971.

Among the colleagues at Indiana University, Bloomington, who cheerfully and effectively contributed chapters are Professors Harry Gradman, Robert Lafayette, Milton Marten, and Dennis Pett. Students in Dr. Walden's doctoral seminar—Kevin Sue Bailey, Dixie Bjurstrom, Peter Connallon, Nelly Ferriera, Joanne Gentry, and Linda Lotto—prepared drafts of six chapters. Appreciation also is due Dolores MacNaughton of the University of Calgary for preparing the chapter on language and critical thinking and Kathryn R. Akural, who collaborated with Dr. Walden in writing the epilog.

The project secretary, Velma Trussell, very much merits our warm thanks. Not only did she produce the typescript expertly; her careful, patient reading and checking saved Dr. Walden and me much time and effort. He and I also express our gratitude for the work of our project assistant and professional colleague, Patricia Love Staver, who spent many hours on manuscript production and bibliographic checks.

As always, it is important to acknowledge the interest, advice, care, and technical skill with which Robert R. Leeper performed his usual editorial alchemy on the present manuscript. Appreciation also is due to Lana Pipes and to the ASCD staff who helped with the various production stages, from in-depth editing to checking proof: Nancy Olson, Production Manager; Myra K. Taub; Teola T. Jones; Elsa Angell; and Patsy Connors.

HAROLD G. SHANE
*Indiana University*

# 1. Introduction: The Language Arts—Relevance in Retrospect

Harold G. Shane

ALL human institutions have a need for traditions. Indeed, wholesome traditions often provide a foundation supporting these institutions—a base that gives them cumulative meaning and integrity, in the original Latin sense of "wholeness" and "completeness."

Over the years, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has developed many *cumulative* traditions. Among them were belief in process during the 1950's, faith in humanistic educational practices and goals during the 1960's, and an active approach to resolving social issues in the 1970's. There has also been a tradition reflected in guides to current research: in mathematics, science, and the social studies, for example; and, of course, in the realm of the language arts.

*Classroom-Relevant Research in the Language Arts* is the fifth in a series that began in 1954 with exploratory work on *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*. In the process of introducing the 1978 review, it is of historical value and interest to note how ASCD language publications reflect social and educational change.

## Impact of Change

Let us look briefly at how changing times have left their mark on research as a whole and then take note of the ways in which studies in the language arts have mirrored the transition through which the schools have passed in a quarter-century that has been crowded with problems and crises.

**Research as a reflection of changes in school or society.** A backward glance to the world of 80-odd years ago provides evidence as to changing research techniques and their foci. The first "modern" research, for example—a study based on a random sample—was done in the field of spelling by Joseph M. Rice, a physician. Writing in 1897 on "The Futility of the Spelling Grind," he reflected a new viewpoint, namely that drill often could be futile since leading

adults in U.S. communities—including school board members—did badly in the elementary school spelling quizzes he administered (10).[1]

The impact of the scientific movement and of the growing veneration of science was illustrated in 1910 when E. L. Thorndike (13) devised a scale to appraise handwriting. A few years later, in 1915, Leonard P. Ayres was to prepare an influential spelling scale. Research was also beginning on so-called scientific word lists (later voiced by Dick and Jane!), and in the 1920's Pressey's first teaching machine made its debut: a bit of candy reinforced learning and provided literal "feedback" for an expected answer! More thoughtful, speculative inquiries and early research were to be done in the twenties, notable among them Piaget's classic (1926) *The Language and Thought of the Child* (9).

Other illustrations of how changing times shaped research and publications[2] are too numerous to mention in the space available here, and in any case a few exemplars make the point:

| *Publication* | *Probable Causal Factors* |
|---|---|
| George S. Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* 1932 (3) | Social unrest associated with the Great Depression |
| Wilford M. Aiken, *The Story of the Eight Year Study*, 1935-1942 (1) | Educational debate between progressives and essentialists |
| Educational Policies Commission, *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, 1938 (5) | A response to social concerns in a world troubled by economic problems and gathering war clouds |
| Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage*, 1940 (4) | Early prescient inquiry into cultural bias and how it had operated to the particular detriment of the black child in an economically depressed era |
| Erik Erickson, *Childhood and Society*, 1950 (6); and Hans Selye, *The Stress of Life*, 1953 (11) | Growing awareness of inner focus, social forces, and the dangerous stress or tension they can create |
| Rudolph Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, 1955 (7) | Epitome of the widespread criticism of public education that began in the late 1940's and exploded in the 1950's |

Literally dozens of other key education-related writings reflecting changing ideas, concerns, mores, growing social insights, technological change, environ-

[1] Numbers in parentheses are coded to match the list of references at the end of each chapter.

[2] For a summary of influential writings and research reports, 1897-1970, see Chapter 3 in Shane et al., *Guiding Human Development* (12: 73-92).

mental dangers, and resource depletion can be listed. McLuhan's *Global Village* (1965), Harrington's *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1965), the Coleman "Equality" Report (1966), the Herndon-Holt-Kozol (1967-70) brand of sharp and sometimes moving critiques of school practices, Barry Commoner's and Ralph Nader's current concern for environment and consumer respectively are all cases in point. Such writings and research are powerfully mediated by the developments woven on the looms of humankind's history.

**The language arts as "mirrors of transition" since 1954.** The ASCD language arts research reviews began in 1954—five in all, counting the present 1978 review. Taken together, these monographs provide an interesting reflection of changing forces, stresses, and intellectual break-throughs during more than two decades of change in the communication skills field. Let us reminisce about a few of the developments of these decades.

**Research in the mid-fifties.** When it appeared in 1955, *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts* proved to be a highly classroom-and-method centered booklet. The hundreds of teachers who were asked what questions *they* would like to see treated in the first of the *Research Helps . . .* publications raised approximately 1,300 of them—some 700 even after duplicate questions were eliminated. Virtually all of these queries zeroed in on the teaching of reading, writing, and spelling: How can reading readiness be developed? What are effective ways of developing word attack skills? What are the relative merits of cursive as opposed to manuscript writing? What should the teacher know about handedness? What are the best word lists for use in individualized spelling programs?

Neither teachers' questions nor published studies were much concerned a quarter-century ago with such matters as, for instance, ethnicity, sexism in readers, or the concepts of visual literacy. The distribution of research and writings also is intriguing in retrospect. Nearly 200 references that were located in 1954 dealt with reading problems in their many forms. With regard to creative writing, grammar, foreign language, and oral English, references were few indeed; the review cited 24, 15, 17, and 14 items, respectively.

**Changes in language arts research by the early 1960's.** A great deal of water poured over the social and educational spillways in the eight years that elapsed between that first ASCD language arts research booklet and its 1963 successor, *Improving Language Arts Instruction Through Research.*

The critical comments of Bestor, Flesch, and Rickover had led to various curriculum changes such as an infusion of the "new math." Charles C. Fries' (8) ideas regarding structural grammar had attracted scholarly interest. Furthermore, the influence of transformational-generative grammar was increasing rapidly as a

result of Noam Chomsky's slender but respected book, *Syntactic Structures* (2). Finally, by 1963, the term "excellence" had become a catchword—at least partly as a result of the Woods Hole Conference out of which had come Jerome Bruner's "sense of the meeting" report, *The Process of Education.*

ASCD's *Improving Language Arts . . .* report reflected at least some of these changes and was virtually double the length of the first review (from 80 to 153 pages) as a result. The questions of 387 classroom teachers who were polled during the early 1960's reflected the criticisms of U.S. schooling, a growing interest in the importance of research, and concern over, for instance, sexism in readers. References also suggested the proliferation of research underway and foreshadowed the explosion of studies that the use of computers and ERIC-type centers would encourage later in the decade.

**Linguistics leaves its imprint on practice.** The third ASCD research publication in the language arts field, *Linguistics and the Classroom Teacher* (1967), grew out of the "English Reformation"—almost a revolution—that resulted from the impact of linguistics in the mid-sixties. In its 120 pages, 329 references were cited; and, because of almost endemic confusion over the meanings and implications of linguistics, the monograph was analogous to a small textbook dealing with backgrounds, terminology, pertinent research, and classroom strategies on which the "new English" impinged. It even included a six-page glossary that bristled with such terms as *allomorph, idiolect, supra-segmental,* and *tagmemics!* Once again new threads woven into language instruction were depicted in the changing patterns of the era.

**The 1971 report.** *Interpreting Language Arts Research for the Teacher* was published by ASCD in 1971. This time the venture was a team project involving 15 contributors who cited 1,168 references. Twenty years of cumulative change in communications skills now sprawled over so wide a range as to require a cooperative approach to the report, which now included chapters on the mass media and linguistics, and in which research germane to reading and to writing was subdivided into elementary and secondary school summaries.

## Looking Toward Yesterday and Tomorrow

The present review of the literature and related research is a product of the many educational mutations that have occurred with the passage of time. Directly or obliquely, it reports studies and writings that have been influenced by the many elements of the language arts heritage which have accumulated since the first slim "research helps" booklet was written. Among these elements are the Great Debate over school practices which began around 1950 and the curriculum reform movement later in the decade. These were followed in the

early and mid-sixties by quests for "excellence" and for "relevance"; by social-humanistic insights related to such matters as the culture of poverty, ethnicity, and liberation movements; and, of course, by the innovative scholarship that gave the profession its clearer grasp of such fields of study and inquiry as linguistic science and visual literacy.

*Classroom-Relevant Research*, in keeping with earlier monographs, looks to tomorrow as well as to yesterday. In its pages appear, with a few exceptions, writings published since 1970—studies that probably foreshadow practices of from five to ten years hence. Furthermore, the present ASCD publication has a selective quality. In the interests of (a) efficient use of the reader's time and (b) economy during a time of sky-high printing costs, the contributing authors have been urged to choose what they deem the most *pertinent* of current studies rather than to take the comprehensive approach followed in 1971 when more than 1,100 references confronted the reader!

To summarize, the five ASCD language arts research publications that have appeared since 1955 are documents which serve to footnote the ways in which education has been impacted by change. Among the dozens of powerful forces or developments mediating school practices for the past quarter-century are the following particularly important ones:

1. *Upward and downward extension* of the responsibilities delegated to education —from early childhood to senior learners

2. *Automation and expanding urban areas* as technological changes uprooted and transplanted families to megalopolitan centers

3. *A new examination of educational goals* as citizens deliberated such questions as who shall be educated, what should be taught, and how to teach it

4. *Clearer conceptions of the meaning of a more responsible society* in which compensatory education and alternative forms of schooling began to find a place

5. *Principles of social justice* such as integration as a means of reducing economic disparities and educational inequities

6. *Greater emphasis on the learner* without disregarding the importance of what was to be learned

7. *Improved perspectives with regard to the nature and cause of cross-cultural problems* both at home and in a transnational context

8. *Innovative practices in education:* flexible scheduling, modules, team teaching, computer-assisted instruction, and the like

9. *Wider recognition by educators of the need for curriculum change* as a result of such factors as the curriculum reform movement beginning in the fifties and the focus on protecting the human environment in the late sixties

10. *An increasing interest in the significance of the future for education* and the growing impact of change agencies such as foundations, government-sponsored research projects, and regional laboratories

11. *The increased use of technology* such as third generation computers adaptable to sophisticated research in education

12. *The substantial expansion of the "education business"* including the widespread application of instructional systems technology.

## Plan of the 1978 Research Review

Because it is a relatively new language-related field, *visual literacy* is the topic of the next chapter. As a realm permeating all chapters, *critical thinking* is the focus of Chapter Three.

Chapters Four and Five, respectively, treat *foreign languages* and the teaching of *English as a second language*. *Listening* is examined in Chapter Six. *Reading* long has been the subject of research and conjecture, and three chapters—Seven, Eight, and Nine—are required to review the literature of the seventies in this field.

*Composition* and *creative writing* are treated in Chapter Ten, *spelling* and *handwriting* in Chapter Eleven, and *literature* in Chapter Twelve. The *Epilog* that brings *Classroom-Relevant Research* to a close looks to the future for research in the language arts.

References for each chapter appear at the end of that chapter. Reference numbers in parentheses in the text are coded to coincide with the numbering of each chapter's reference list. When numbers are separated by a colon, the second number refers to the page on which a citation appears. For example, "Cochran (2: 3)" indicates a citation from page three of the second entry in a given chapter reference list.

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# 2. Visual Literacy

Dennis W. Pett

ON THE motion picture screen we see:

Orange leaves glowing in the evening sun . . . a slow dissolve. . . .

Wintry blasts shaking snow-laden branches . . . a slow dissolve. . . .

A violet crocus pushing through melting snow. . . .

We know tacitly as we watch that several months have elapsed; we can "read" or interpret what the film seeks to tell us. This is one aspect of visual literacy. The concepts are old. Art teachers have been teaching youngsters to "read" and appreciate master works of art for many years. Film writers have delved into the meanings created by optical effects and by dynamic editing. Communication researchers have studied the effects of media on children and adults.

However, the term "visual literacy" in the broad field of communications skills is a relatively new one, having come into common use as recently as 1969 when the first national conference on visual literacy was held in Rochester, New York. Since that time a growing number of conferences and publications have been devoted to the topic.

Four important questions to consider in relation to visual literacy are:

1. What is visual literacy—how is it defined?
2. Why is visual literacy important—what contributions can it make to education?
3. What does research contribute to visual literacy—what directions has research taken and what directions may it take in the future?
4. How are visual literacy programs implemented?

Each of the four queries will be considered in turn as we explore this recently opened territory in the realm of language arts-communication skills.

## What Is Visual Literacy?

In mid-1976 about 75 educators spent a week at Lake Okoboji, Iowa, probing and brainstorming about "visual literacy." As one might expect, in view of the newness of the field, virtually each person had his or her own definition of the term, but two key things stand out in many of the definitions. *First*, there is such a thing as visual languaging. *Second*, visual literacy refers to a person's ability to understand and evaluate this language as well as his or her ability to use visual languaging to communicate.

Cochran (2:3) pointed out that originally and traditionally literacy was identified with literature and the abilities related to written communication. However, literacy—including visual literacy—now has come to be associated with the total body of skills needed for effective communication in any medium. There are similarities, for instance, between verbal and visual languages. Visual language uses visual symbols in a linear manner and, as in written language, visual elements can be combined in many ways to say different things. Words do not have meanings except for the meaning each individual ascribes to them. Similarly, as Wendt (31) indicated, meanings reside not in pictures themselves, but in what we bring or ascribe to them. Turbayne (29: 241) said it in another way: what we *see* are sense data, what we *perceive* are mind facta. When we look at a so-called visual illusion it is the mind that is deluding us.

About 1950, Henry Smith of Indiana University, Bloomington, developed pictorial materials to show how visual elements are used as subjects and as modifiers comparable to nouns and adjectives. Since that time Fransecky and Debes (9) as well as others have pointed out linkages between the grammars of visual and verbal language. Debes (4) has developed a hierarchy of visual skills ranging from distinguishing light from dark to being able to apply the grammar and syntax of visual language in the interpretation or creation of visual messages. In the same vein, Randhawa (25) has suggested the need for a preliminary taxonomy of visual literacy analogous to Bloom's taxonomy in the cognitive domain. Since there is ample evidence that visual languaging not only exists but also is a skill that can be learned, let us examine more closely the matter of its importance.

## Why Is Visual Literacy Important?

I can't believe I ate the whole thing.

Plop, plop, fizz, fizz. . . .

Try it, you'll like it.

It's the real thing.

At present most people in the United States would recognize these lines from well-known and oft-repeated commercials. The average person watches

over 20 hours of television a week. As Hattersley (15) pointed out, since TV is a dominant and powerful visual form, we need to know what it *is*, what it *does*, and *how* it does it. We need a knowledge of visual conventions and experience in reading visuals. Visual communication on television includes hidden symbolic or implied information. Visual literacy can help us cope with this kind of communication (17).

Peters (23: 197ff.) indicated that one limiting factor in the use of educational films has been the lack of filmic knowledge by students. Therefore he contended that we need to see and to understand the nature and significance of thoughts expressed visually. Early films simply recorded a stage production—a camera record of what an audience at a play would see. As film making increased in sophistication, moving cameras, juxtaposition of images to create new meanings, optical effects, and other techniques began to create a film language which eventually developed a complex vocabulary and elaborate syntax. Since communication takes place when the sender and receiver are in agreement on the symbols and on the arrangement, there is need for planned learning experiences that will enable both young and old to become more literate in the language of films.

McLuhan and Fiore (19: 8ff.) noted more than a decade ago that ". . . media work us over completely. Their influence is so pervasive that no part of us is left untouched, unaffected, unaltered." Their observation underscores the point that visual media are an important part of our lives and an irrefutable reason for emphasizing visual literacy in the curriculum.

As children grow, it is important to replace the passive reception of visual impressions with the active use of the eye and mind to communicate visually (12: 237-39). Under these circumstances it is encouraging to note that technological advances have made it possible for preschool children to use cameras to communicate with photographs and for school-age children to make Super-8 films and videotapes.

People are influenced by television in two languaging forms—the visual and the verbal. They appear intuitively to know something about how it works, judging by the widespread ability of Americans to interpret TV messages. This knowledge provides a base for educating both children and adults in the more refined forms of personal communication through such media as photography (15: 6ff.).

Another benefit in using photography and other visual media as a part of one's personal resources in communication is the motivating effect of such media on children who have difficulty with verbal communication. As Hedges (16) has indicated, photography also can be used to build better self-concepts.

The beginning sensations of the newborn are predominantly tactile as they move through the very early stages of development. Infants soon reach a point,

however, where what they see becomes a source of the primary sensations that contribute to the learning of language. Randhawa (24) pointed out that children have a greater capacity to process visual than auditory inputs, and that a young child can describe what is seen through nonverbal inputs better than through verbal descriptions.

Some interesting relationships are being established between verbal and visual performance. In a presentation at the 1975 meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Debes (3: 1-16) spoke about some recent changes in scores on the Stanford-Binêt tests. Current scores rise rapidly to about 110 at age 1½, then increase more slowly to 111 at age 5½. The scores then drop back to near 100 when boys and girls are 8½ years old. Today's children under 5½ apparently know more than their counterparts of 20 years ago. However, as one might expect from the ages of the children sampled, item analysis shows that the questions associated with the increased IQ scores are nonverbal items. The higher scores are recorded at an age when television is a dominant influence, and the subsequent drop occurs at a time when verbal activities are being emphasized in school.

As of 1977 certain scholastic achievement test scores have been declining slightly each year for 14 years, according to the College Entrance Examination Board's Special Advisory Panel. Perhaps much of what children and youth have been learning through visual means is not related to our predominantly verbal tests. In any case, Debes (5: 40ff.) has concluded on the basis of considerable evidence that we should be able to provide visual learning opportunities that will help young learners achieve at a superior level. Methodically fostering visual literacy presumably would improve verbal literacy also.

For some time it has been recognized that the hemispheres of the brain are generally specialized for different functions. The left hemisphere seems to deal primarily with verbal and mathematical functions; the right hemisphere primarily with spatial functions. Both hemispheres seem to deal with sequencing. It makes sense to be providing learning environments in which both halves of the brain can develop fully.

## What Does Research Contribute to Visual Literacy?

Clarence Williams (32) was one of the first persons to summarize some of the research findings in visual literacy. He presented them in the form of nine propositions:

1. Early visual deprivation can relate to later visual problems.
2. Visual enrichment in early life increases success in visual tasks in later life.
3. A good program of visual enrichment can probably increase learning.

4. Ability to sequence visual stimuli is related to experience of the learner.

5. The development of the glance curve is related to sequencing experiences.

6. Hierarchical potential in a scene or pictorial sequence is related to experiences, sequencing ability, and development of verbal literacy.

7. Ability in the development of visual metaphoric communication is related to the development of verbal literacy.

8. There is a range of visual literacy sophistication related to experience and opportunities.

9. The ability to go back and forth between visual and verbal metaphors is related to visual and verbal development.

Research that relates to the concept of visual literacy falls into several major categories.

**Seeing and learning from pictures.** In an article in *Art Quarterly* in 1950, Gaffron (10) pointed out that skill in reading pictures is a learned phenomenon and in the western world observers tend to read pictures from left to right. For instance, a study by Brandt (1) indicated that the first point of fixation when looking at a picture is in the upper left quadrant, and 60 percent of the viewing time is spent looking at the upper half of a picture.

The works of Haber (13) and others have indicated that the recognition memory scores for a large number of pictures shown at intervals is very high. In one study viewers recalled 85 to 95 percent of 2,560 slides shown at ten-second intervals. Haber took note of a difference in the form of visual and verbal memory. Images of pictures are stored in pictorial form, he indicated, and words are taken out of pictorial form and stored and recalled as words.

Hanes (14: 19ff.) emphasized the diversity that exists in research on learning from pictures as it relates to the developmental aspects of children. He listed three variables that interact in the process of perceptual learning: (a) learner characteristics, (b) stimulus attributes, and (c) the requirements of the learning task.

**Visual-verbal learning.** People process visual and verbal stimuli differently. In *The Bisected Brain*, Gazzaniga (11) discussed in detail the function of the halves of the brain. The two halves are connected by a bundle of nerve fibers. When intact, the "two brains" exchange information and work together. The left half, however, is primarily related to verbal-mathematical behavior while the right is primarily related to visual-spatial behavior. This division of functions may be illustrated by considering the Japanese languages Katakana and Konji. Katakana is a verbal language where visual letters represent sounds as in English; Konji is a visual language and symbols represent concepts. If the left brain of a person who is competent in both these languages is damaged, he or she can still use and process Konji although Katakana abilities are lost (5: 20ff.).

Young children, at very early ages, have a greater capacity for processing visual input than verbal input. Perhaps for this reason, media communicators "talk" to children with visual language before the verbal vocabulary is significantly developed. This seems to have resulted in a generation with different skills from those attained by persons who did not grow up with television as a commonplace in their lives. Debes (5) noted a study that showed great differences in sequencing abilities between children and pre-TV era adults: the former were appreciably more skilled in reading visual signs.

Still on the theme of visual learning, an investigation of a group of third-grade children with reading difficulties showed that nearly all the children had a high degree of three-dimensional capacity. Reading problems were inversely proportional to three-dimensional visualization ability. In another study, children with a balance of visual and verbal opportunities in the first grade outdid their peers and four years later continued to excel in academic achievement (5: 10ff.).

In a study of emotionally disturbed children, Strandberg and Griffith (28) compared the subjects' verbal responses to pictures of specified objects with verbal responses to pictures the children took at home. Three interesting results occurred:

1. Verbal language responses were longer and grammatically more complex when the children were talking about pictures taken at home.

2. Training in picture sequencing increased the length and complexity of verbal language responses.

3. The children's verbal language behavior was more spontaneous when they were describing pictures taken at home.

There seems to be a motivational factor related to the use of pictures in conjunction with verbal tasks. This is related to the improvement in self-concept that has been noted by several writers. Nuell and Fryrear (22) worked on a photo project with a group of subjects ages 13-16 who scored below the fiftieth percentile on the Coopersmith Behavioral Rating Form and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. Subjects used simple, inexpensive cameras to take pictures that were then organized into scrapbooks. Post-test scores showed significant increases in self-concept scores. As Myra Ross (27) concluded in working with filmic media, film making is an "effective, exciting, and innovative way of changing self-concept."

If visual languaging is a different skill from verbal languaging, then we need to understand ways to test—to measure—visual abilities.

**Measuring visual abilities.** Visual testing can be divided into two general categories. The first consists of tests that measure various aspects of visual perception: an example of these are figure drawing tests reviewed by McWhinnie

(20) in 1971. In his review of research he listed six uses for such tests in art education and psychology:

1. To measure nonverbal aspects of intelligence
2. To provide nonverbal measures of emotional and personality disorders
3. To assess perceptual style
4. To measure perception growth in art
5. To measure cross-cultural aspects of perceptual style and intelligence
6. To measure children's growth and development in art.

Of great concern to proponents of visual literacy is a second category of tests—those used to measure the nonverbal components of a wide variety of subject matter. Although films, videotapes, and other visual media have been used to assess achievement of a variety of educational objectives, most appraisals continue to be made with conventional paper and pencil tests—tests that depend on verbal responses. Ellison (7) noted that tests should be designed to fit the instructional methodology, content, and performance expectations. Among 16 advantages he listed for nonverbal tests, three seem particularly important: (a) they can measure objectives not easily measured by paper and pencil tests, (b) they reduce dependence on reading as the means of producing test stimuli, and (c) for some objectives they can be superior to paper and pencil tests for measuring achievement. Despite the widely expressed need for ways of measuring nonverbal learning and the advantages that have been cited for nonverbal tests, there actually is little literature related to this area.

A variety of research efforts have contributed to the visual literacy area, but as Fork and Jonassen (8: 2ff.) have pointed out, there is as yet no generally accepted base for conducting visual literacy research. One must infer that a framework is needed; a framework that will encompass both relevant practical and important theoretical dimensions of the field.

In the meantime two areas of research seem particularly promising for further study.

1. We need to know more about how children learn from pictures and how this relates to the various stages of their development.

2. We need to find better ways to test and measure visual languaging abilities at a variety of age levels.

## How Are Visual Literacy Programs Implemented?

The real value of visual literacy is attained only if it can be more completely woven into the curriculum. Unfortunately, well-conceived visual literacy programs are by no means widely implemented or even accepted in theory. On the

other hand, a few outstanding programs have begun to demonstrate what the integration of visual literacy concepts into curricula can accomplish. A primary goal of such programs, according to Debes (3: 15ff.), is to help children grow in the ability to visualize ideas, organize them, think of ways to express them visually, and encode them in sequential, visual metaphors.

Books such as Meiselas' *Learn To See* (21), McKim's *Experiences in Visual Thinking* (18), and Dondis' *A Primer of Visual Literacy* (6) provide promising suggestions for content that might be incorporated into visual literacy programs. Some examples of programs that have been developed are described in a Kodak publication, *Visual Literacy Programs That Work* (30). Ventures in this new literacy concept have been introduced at the Garfield Elementary School in Montebello, California, where seven- and eight-year-olds are using cameras to develop skills in conceptualization, design, and language development. At Willowbrook High School in Villa Park, Illinois, students have used photography to communicate how they feel about themselves and their world. Another illustration is the "Media Now" course developed at the Southwest Iowa Learning Resources Center; this course has as its major objectives the improvement of young adolescents' mass media knowledge and techniques, an increase in their abilities to produce visual communications, a decrease in their susceptibility to persuasion by the mass media, and an increase in positive attitudes toward media. The James Russell Lowell Elementary School in San Diego also has introduced visual literacy instruction as a means of helping children with reading problems. Results thus far are encouraging—both self-concept and reading skills have been improved.

One more example is provided by Milford, Ohio, where visual communication is part of the regular curriculum from first through twelfth grades. This program reflects the belief that visual skills are basic to effective participation in today's society. An example of one course in the curriculum is the tenth-grade course with the simple title, "Media."

Four areas are emphasized: (a) the analysis of visual-aural messages; (b) the development of general understanding of the mechanics and operation of various media; (c) the comparative strengths and weaknesses of visual and print media; and (d) a look into possible future uses of film and television.

In view of its brief history, the field of visual literacy seems to be faring reasonably well. Nonetheless, its full potential has yet to be determined as a means of developing in U.S. children better means of understanding themselves and communicating with accuracy, empathy, and insight.

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# 3. Language Development and Critical Thinking

Dolores MacNaughton

LANGUAGE arts and the ability to think critically probably are intimately related. The power to use language also is as uniquely human as psychologist David Krech pointed out many years ago (18: 374). In short, cognition and the spoken word are as closely related as two sides of the same coin. This chapter reviews research related to critical thinking, with particular heed given to its relation to vocabulary development.

## Research Bearing on Vocabulary Development

**Critical thinking and vocabulary.** Several theoretical opinions and research findings suggest that cognitive processes are fused with language processes. Vygotsky, the distinguished Russian scholar, pointed out that "the speech structures mastered by the child become the basis of his thinking" (28: 51). In the same vein, Piaget's studies (23, 24) suggested language is a mode for symbolizing thought, while Carroll (6) concluded that we can think of language as a system of responses that facilitates thinking. Wilkinson subsequently stated that language profoundly transforms thought by helping it to attain a more advanced level (31: 79). Finally, Cazden (7) proposed that internal language processes are exemplified in thought which is vital to cognitive development.

Several studies which are also relevant to the topic of critical thinking and vocabulary were reported by the American Council on Education (Dressel and Mayhew, 11). Selected committee members examined the relationship of critical thinking ability in social science and the learner's knowledge of terminology necessary for success in understanding social science. The Test of Critical Thinking in Social Science and the Vocabulary Test were administered to college students to test the hypothesis that a knowledge of terminology is essential for critical thinking but not sufficient *of itself* to ensure success in critical thinking. The results of the investigation supported the generalization that knowledge of the vocabulary used in the content of the social science area is not per se a guarantee of success in critical thinking.

A study by MacNaughton (20: 81) led to the conclusion that a significant relationship does exist between each of three components of critical thinking (inference, deduction, interpretation), as measured by the Watson-Glaser Thinking Appraisal, and listening vocabulary and reading vocabulary respectively, as measured by the Durrell Listening Reading Series. Additional results of this study indicated that both listening vocabulary and reading vocabulary are effective predictors of each of the three components of critical thinking, but that listening vocabulary is the most effective predictor of all.

A number of other educators have expressed opinions about the relationship of critical thinking and vocabulary. As early as 1910, Dewey (10) stated that oral and written speech can be perfected as tools for assisting thought. Anderson (2) asserted that an impoverished vocabulary is a barrier to critical thinking, and that appropriate language expressions lead to the fostering of critical thought. Anderson's claim was disputed by D'Angelo (8) when he suggested that a poor vocabulary is not necessarily a barrier to critical thinking. A student can possess a simple vocabulary, he argued, and still correctly apply different thinking skills.

It would appear that the literature and research have little that is conclusive to contribute to the relationship of critical thinking and vocabulary. However, a profound interest in the topic has been expressed by educators who have theorized about how cognitive processes relate to language processes.

## Studies with an Indirect Bearing on the Language Arts

**Critical thinking and intelligence.** One of the concerns of educators who have investigated critical thinking has been its relationship to intelligence. Do tests of intelligence and critical thinking—both closely linked to language—measure the same traits? Or is critical thinking independent of intelligence? Evidence can be adduced from a number of studies to support the hypothesis that performance on intelligence tests will be related, but not highly, to performance on critical thinking tests (Dressel and Mayhew, 11; Furst, 13; Glaser, 14; Westbrook and Sellers, 30). Critical thinking thus appears to be at least partially independent of what is commonly measured as "general intelligence."

**Can critical thinking be taught?** A review of several studies supports the suggestion that critical thinking skills can be taught. As an illustration, a classical experiment was reported by Glaser in 1941 (14). The results of the investigation indicated that the students who were taught by methods dealing specifically with concepts of critical thinking made significantly greater gains on the Watson-Glaser Tests of Critical Thinking than did the students who studied regular subject content.

A cooperative study of evaluation in general education (Dressel and

Mayhew, 11) involving college students appeared to support the conclusion that explicit attention to critical thinking can result in much richer and more varied approaches to teaching and also can encourage greater student growth in critical thinking.

Livingston's study (19) led to the conclusion that students' critical thinking ability improved as a result of instruction in general semantics, and somewhat later Rodunsky (25) suggested that the use of an inductive-approach social studies unit is likely to result in critical thinking growth. Bibb (4) developed instructional materials which he suggested could be used to teach various categories of critical thinking skills related to the teaching of English, while Hall (16) indicated that students of teachers trained in methods of teaching critical thinking achieved a significant gain in critical thinking ability.

When current evidence is examined, it sometimes supports the proposition that educators can teach critical thinking skills. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that other studies (Harris, 17; Massialas, 21; Witt, 32) indicated inconclusive results when methods of teaching critical thinking were examined. Apparently, the jury is still out and it must be concluded that there is a need for further research which investigates the concept of critical thinking in relation to successful instructional strategies.

**Critical thinking and aptitude.** It should be noted that many aptitude tests have been developed as tests of *scholastic* ability. Such tests commonly are used in appraising fundamental intellectual abilities such as verbal reasoning, numerical ability, and abstract reasoning rather than specialized learning abilities such as art and music. The following two paragraphs concern themselves with thinking and aptitude as determined through the use of scholastic aptitude tests.

A 1950 study by Furst (13: 616) tested the hypothesis: "Performance on various specialized tests of critical thinking will become more independent of scholastic aptitude as a result of a relatively prolonged period of instruction in thinking skills." Since the correlations between tests of critical thinking and tests of scholastic aptitude changed only slightly after a two-year period of instruction in critical thinking skills, Furst suggested there was little support for the hypothesis that such interrelations will tend to decrease as a result of instruction in thinking skills. Furst also concluded that tests of critical thinking measure characteristics of student behavior which are not highly related to measures of scholastic aptitude. He further suggested that students at all levels of scholastic aptitude may be able to develop to a relatively high degree those various skills measured in his study as aspects of critical thinking.

The results of previously mentioned studies sponsored by the American Council on Education (Dressel and Mayhew, 11) indicated that critical thinking scores in that era did not correlate highly with scholastic aptitude scores. These

results led the committee to conclude that critical thinking ability is not completely dependent on scholastic aptitude. MacNaughton (20) reported that a significant relationship existed between each of three critical thinking components—inference, deduction, interpretation—and three scholastic aptitude measures—verbal reasoning, spelling, grammar—as measured by the Differential Aptitude Tests.

The conclusions of the studies cited suggest that the ability to become proficient in the use of critical thinking skills is not completely dependent on scholastic aptitude. Patently, in view of the limited number of studies on the topic, the relationship of critical thinking ability and aptitude is open to further investigation.

**Critical thinking and academic achievement.** Particularly since the 1977 report on academic score decline was published by the College Entrance Examination Board, there has been even greater interest in achievement in the United States and Canada. Several studies of critical thinking have investigated its relationship to academic achievement. The purpose of these investigations has been to identify those academic areas which seem to reflect the use of critical thinking skills. A survey of the literature and research reveals varying conclusions and opinions as to the relationship.

On the one hand, Glaser (14) concluded that a low correlation exists between academic achievement scores and critical thinking, nor did Burns (5) detect any significant relationship between the two variables. Smith (27) reported that critical thinking ability and academic achievement in science tend to reflect each other with respect to the achievement of males but not females. This does not jibe with findings by Denny (9) that critical thinking correlated with knowledge of science for both males and females. MacNaughton (20) added to the evidence in a 1976 inquiry which suggested that a significant relationship exists between critical thinking and the language arts academic achievement measure.

Investigations and opinions as to the relationship between the ability to read and the ability to think critically also do not seem to agree in their conclusions. Betts (3) inferred from his survey of the literature that only a low positive relationship, if any, exists between reading ability and critical thinking ability. Moreover, Watson and Glaser (29) suggested that many persons who are superior readers may score relatively low in critical thinking. Conversely, Haas (15) reported that a positive relationship between measures of critical thinking and reading ability exclusive of rate *does* exist. More recently, Harris (17) indicated that reading ability is a consistent significant concomitant of critical thinking competencies.

It would appear that interested students should examine the original re-

search data cited in past investigations. And quite obviously additional research is needed to identify those academic areas which reflect the use of critical thinking skills, since research results to date appear to be inconclusive.

**Does critical thinking vary with sex differences?** A realm of inquiry which has received considerable attention has been the assessment of whether the critical thinking ability of females differs from the critical thinking ability of males. The following research data present some of the conclusions that have been reached on the topic. Edwards (12) indicated that in high school science, males think more critically than females, and Smith (27) came to an analogous conclusion that in the sciences males in grades eleven and twelve think more critically than do females in those grades. However, Alston (1) suggested in a doctoral study that the critical thinking ability of male and female teachers does not vary significantly. Nixon (22) came to the same decision, as did Burns (5) after a study of male and female undergraduates. With respect to children and adolescents, Harris (17) suggested that males and females in grade five do not differ in their ability to think critically, and MacNaughton (20) indicated that males and females in grade nine differ only in the "interpretation" component of critical thinking, in regard to which males think more critically than females. Only Schafer's (26) doctoral research, which focused on teachers, indicated that female teachers think more critically than male teachers.

Whatever the persuasion of the reader may be, there is no conclusive evidence to support any one theory as to whether males and females differ in their ability to think critically!

**In conclusion.** References extending back at least to 1910 show that the topic of critical thinking long has been one of educational interest. However, there continues to be a need for more comprehensive understanding of the concept of critical thinking. Once obtained, such knowledge can then be used to provide a framework for the development of instructional methods and materials to be used in teaching critical thinking skills.

Insofar as the language arts are concerned, classroom-relevant research distinctly suggests that time spent on vocabulary development is a good means of increasing pupils' potential ability to engage in the symbol manipulation involved in critical thought processes.

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# 4. Research in the Realm of Second Language Instruction

Robert C. Lafayette

THE famous German poet, novelist, and playwright Johann von Goethe once said, "He who knows no foreign language has never really learned his own." Ironically, if declines in foreign language enrollments in the United States are any indicator, either the great majority of Americans are not familiar with the statement or—if they are—they probably do not believe it. Throughout the history of American education, foreign languages, except Latin and Greek, have almost always been electives and subject to the vagaries of educational and social pressures at a given time.

## Trends in the Past Decade

**Enrollment.** Due to Sputnik and to the National Defense Education Act of 1958, foreign languages enjoyed a significant period of growth during the early sixties. National enrollment statistics (57) tell us that in 1968 nearly five million students in the public secondary schools were enrolled in foreign language instruction. That represented 27.1 percent of the total public secondary school population. By 1974, enrollment in foreign languages had plummeted by some 700,000 while the total enrollment increased by approximately 3½ million; thus only 19.2 percent of secondary school students in the United States were receiving language instruction. The decline can be attributed to a variety of factors. Conjecture suggests that they include a divisive war in Vietnam, student rejection of traditional content during the late sixties and early seventies, the recession of the early seventies, and a lack of insight as to the value of foreign language. Chastain (10: 37) said, "If the economy worsens, society's interests will turn inward, and language learning will be less important than at present." However, the middle seventies, reinforced by the Bicentennial, have witnessed significant social developments, the most important of which has been the increased interest in ethnicity and cultural pluralism, intensified in part by the growing impact of Spanish-speaking Americans. This in turn has fostered, and in certain states introduced, bilingual education in American schools. The trend,

in addition to expanding international business and travel, promises to have a powerful impact on the future of foreign language instruction.

**Research trends.** Paradoxically, during a period of declining enrollments, the profession experienced a substantial proliferation of professional literature. In 1968, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) issued the first volume of the *ACTFL Review of Foreign Language Education,* edited by Birkmaier (4). Subsequently, the Council has sponsored yearly volumes edited by Lange (34, 35, 36) and Jarvis (23, 24, 25, 26); each contains more than 1,000 references concerning contemporary trends in foreign language teaching.

Since 1968, foreign language education has also experienced considerable diversification of both curriculum and instruction. As they began to dispel the impression that their foreign language programs catered only to above-average students, the schools made substantial strides in meeting the needs of a much larger student population by emphasizing basic communication skills and the cultural importance of language instruction, in addition to experimenting with various aspects of individualized instruction.

Paralleling present trends in educational research, the great majority of recent research studies in foreign language teaching have been descriptive in nature. In a recent compilation of 300 studies done since 1970, Frechette (17) identified 204 of these as "descriptive." Within this category, 96 were of the interrelationship type, including case studies, correlational studies, and comparative studies. The remainder of these descriptive studies were for the most part surveys and growth or trend studies. Experimental research characterized by rigorous control over variables was found in less than 100 of the studies compiled.

## Instructional Strategies

**The eclectic movement.** Unlike the decade of the sixties which was dominated by audio-lingual approaches that stressed habit formation through mimicry, memorization, and pattern drill, thus far the seventies can best be characterized as the decade of eclecticism. In fine, there is virtually no consensus among language teachers as to which methods are best. This is due in part to the lack of any persuasive research signaling the superiority of audio-lingualism. Chastain and Woerdehoff (11), Smith (54), Mueller (42), and Von Elek and Oskarsson (61) all conducted studies comparing the audio-lingual method with variants of a cognitive approach emphasizing understanding, meaning, and explicit explanation of linguistic forms. In no case did the results favor the audio-lingual method, and only Smith (54) found that no significant difference

appeared to exist between the two. The other scholars concluded that a cognitive approach was the superior method.

Naturally, this finding was not entirely acceptable to the mass of foreign language teachers, many of whom had been trained within the narrow confines of audio-lingualism. This led to uncertainty, which in turn resulted in the classroom teacher's turning to eclecticism—using either an audio-lingual approach (often modified by some basic cognitive procedures) or a cognitive approach influenced by remnants of audio-lingualism.

**Divergent methodologies.** Eclecticism did not deter certain individuals from developing and advocating highly specific approaches to language teaching, but none seems to have had any significant impact on the profession as a whole. It is important, nonetheless, to mention a few because they may signal a return to more structured methodologies. Gattegno (18), advocating the "Silent Way" approach, claimed that learning is not primarily imitation or drill. Rather, the mind draws on everything it has already acquired, including its experience in learning its native language. The method gets its name from the notion that the teacher must stop interfering or sidetracking the learner's activity. Gattegno proposed that students should do 90 percent or more of the talking in chorus or individually in response to the teacher's gestures.

"Community Language Learning," described by La Forge (32), involves a simple mechanical classroom procedure. The learners, seated in a closed circle, talk with one another in the foreign language, tape-record what they say, play it back, write it down, and identify its component parts. Teachers or resource persons help them produce the utterance in the foreign language and eventually help them to analyze what was said.

Individuals interested in information about other unique approaches to foreign language teaching may consult Diller (14) or Stevick (56), both of whom provide excellent overviews of specific methodologies.

Many language teachers share the conviction that language learning must occur within a meaningful context; thus the current emphasis on meaningful dialogs, including functional practice or drills. Both Oller and Obrecht (45) and Jarvis (22) concluded that it is undesirable for students to practice structural patterns in drills that are devoid of a meaningful or communicative context.

These studies paved the way for a significant movement in foreign language teaching, "communicative competence." Savignon defined communicative competence as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting—that is, in a dynamic exchange in which *linguistic competence* must adapt itself to the total informational input, linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors" (49: 8). In her experiment Savignon compared the effect of three treatments on tests of linguistic and communicative competence in three beginning college French classes. All three groups met for four 50-minute periods per

week for the same basic course of instruction. Experimental group 1 spent an additional 50-minute period learning to communicate, experimental group 2 devoted the hour to studying aspects of French culture in English, and the third group, the control group, used the time to practice French structure in the language laboratory. Results showed no significant differences among the three groups on standardized tests of linguistic competence in listening and reading or on course examinations and final grades. The communicative skills experimental group, however, scored significantly better on communication tests designed by the experimenter.

In an analogous study, Joiner (27) contrasted communicative practice involving transmission of new information with meaningful practice composed of drills and question-answer exercises where no real information was transmitted. Results showed that students involved in the communicative treatment scored significantly higher on an oral communication test. Similar to the findings of Savignon, the treatments did not significantly affect scores on other language skills.

Bartz (3) and Schulz (50) examined the relationships between linguistic and communicative tests in the four skills in German and French respectively. Although both found significant positive relationships between the two, they concluded that serious attention should be paid to teaching and testing linguistic and communicative competence separately.

In discussing the implications of communicative competence for the design of foreign language teaching syllabi, Valdman (58) favored the use of the term "approximative communicative competence" because sociolinguists who originally introduced the term "communicative competence" meant it to include not only the ability to communicate a message but also the ability to apply all the various social rules of language use, a goal usually beyond the expectations of American foreign language courses. Valdman claimed that if approximative communicative competence is to be an important goal in the American classroom, then the present syllabus must undergo a thorough revision. He suggested that revisions should be guided by the following principles: (a) drastic reduction of the number of features introduced; (b) use of cyclical rather than linear ordering; (c) reduction of the complexity of material presented; (d) reduction of variants and alternants; (e) tolerance of learner errors.

**Individualized instruction.** Individualized instruction has had a significant impact on American education during the 1970's, and among all the different subject matter areas in today's curriculum, foreign language is probably the most involved. The professional literature is replete with articles on the topic; in fact *Foreign Language Annals*, the official organ of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, included a special feature on individualized instruction in every issue for a period of three years. In addition to several books

of edited readings, Disick (15), Grittner and LaLeike (19), Logan (39), and Steiner (55) provide classroom teachers with excellent books on the classroom implementation of individualized instruction. All four offer very practical suggestions which are not limited to teachers interested in this mode of instruction.

Unfortunately, interest in individualized instruction has not been accompanied by definitive research efforts. In a two-year study in beginning and intermediate German courses at the University of California at Berkeley, Clausing, Mueller, and Stein (12) reported that the performance of individually instructed students was significantly better on all written tests than that of students in a basic course for which the same textbook was used. The oral performance of the individualized instruction group also was found to be equal to that of students in the basic course.

La Charité and Mueller (29) reported that a flexible individualized instruction program in beginning French at the University of Kentucky has resulted in better student attitudes toward language learning, a significant increase in enrollment (about 40 percent) without any decrease in results as measured by Modern Language Association cooperative tests, and a higher retention of those students who begin the program.

One of the significant developments emanating from the interest in individualized instruction among foreign language teachers has been a considerable influx of individualized materials into the textbook market. Bull et al. (6), for instance, made use of a modified programmed instruction approach in their Spanish texts. The Center for Curriculum Development (9) and La Grone and Romera-Navarro (33) maintained standard texts but provided sets of individualized materials as an option. Valette and Valette (60), in their teacher's edition, suggested various modifications of the basic text to meet different student goals.

## Curricular Changes

**Culture concepts.** During the past ten years classroom teachers and textbook publishers have been endeavoring to place a greater emphasis on the teaching of language in the context of its culture. In the past, culture had been treated primarily in a historical, geographic, and artistic manner. As a result of the more recent approach, there is a better balance at present between culture as the history of civilization and the attention paid to the customs, daily activities, and social structures of a people. Nostrand (43) suggested the use of a thematic approach for grouping the various patterns of a culture into 10-12 major categories such as love, religion, and individuality. Santoni (48), on the other hand, argued for a contextual approach because he saw significant cultural differences reflected in linguistic differences.

Although no significant research exists in the area of teaching culture, teachers should be aware of three books—Altman and Hanzeli (2), Lafayette (31), and Seelye (52)—that contain numerous practical suggestions for teaching culture in the classroom. The latter suggests seven basic objectives for teaching culture and provides many useful ideas.

The emphasis on culture is also evident in recently released foreign language texts and supplementary materials. Valdman, MacMillin, La Vergne, and Belasco (59), Valette and Valette (60), and *Voix et Visages de la France* (9), for example, all include culture sections. In the teacher's edition, Valdman et al. (59) include a cultural guide treating specific cultural traits. Valette and Valette (60) presented three principal cultural themes in their second level text: (a) attitudes, values, and behavior of contemporary French youth; (b) aspects of life in France; and (c) the diversity of the French-speaking world.

In addition to basic texts reflecting the impact of culture, a multitude of supplementary materials deal with the subject. Among them is the series in French, German, Italian, and Spanish published by National Textbook Company; this series concerns the use of newspapers and magazines in the teaching of contemporary culture. For more information see Culver (13), Jorstad (28), Rallo (46), Schulz (51), and Seelye and Day (53).

**Programs for early adolescents.** A second curricular change in language teaching has occurred at the junior high/middle school level of instruction. Partly due to the rapid disappearance of FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary School) programs throughout the country and also to the exploratory nature of middle school education, the profession has witnessed a rapid development of exploratory foreign language programs. Fearing and Grittner (16) identified four types of programs: (a) the "Language Potpourri" where three to five languages are offered for limited periods during the academic year; (b) the "General Language Course" which focuses on the nature of language; (c) the "Single Language Exploratory Offering"; and (d) the "Required Elective Program" in which students are required to study for a semester one of the languages offered in high school. Adcock (1) reported the results of a national survey showing that, of the four, Language Potpourri is the type most frequently adopted. Detailed descriptions of exploratory courses can be found in Bourque and Chehy (5) and in Morrow (40).

**The minicourse.** In an attempt to diversify the curriculum and to retain advanced students, some foreign language programs have introduced the concept of minicourses, courses shorter than the established length of the normal academic unit. In a national survey, Lafayette (30) identified the basic minicourse characteristics as follows:

1. The majority of programs limit their minicourse sequences to advanced levels of instruction.

2. The length of minicourses ranges from one to 18 weeks, the most popular length corresponding to the length of a grading period.

3. The content of minicourses varies from specific skill-oriented courses to sophisticated literary offerings, with the greatest concentration being in the area of culture.

Lafayette concluded that the most significant change brought about by minicourses has been the broadening of content at advanced levels of instruction.

**Foreign languages in the elementary school.** Professional literature indicates that foreign languages in the elementary schools (FLES) are in decline, especially in communities where a foreign language is not in daily use. Two longitudinal studies done in Britain and Japan provide relevant data. Both indicate that younger children are no better at a foreign language than are older children. After a ten-year study of British children beginning the study of French at age eight, Burstall concluded, "Pupils taught French from the age of eight did not show any substantial gains in achievement, compared with those who had been taught French from the age of eleven. By the age of sixteen, the only area in which the pupils taught French from the age of eight consistently showed any superiority was that of listening comprehension" (7: 248).

The findings of Oller and Nagato (44) are strikingly similar. After a six-year study of Japanese girls, they found that students with six years of English prior to entering junior high school were overtaken by those who began English in junior high by the time they reached the eleventh grade. In both studies it was pointed out that FLES and non-FLES students are often integrated once they reach the eighth or ninth grade. This evidence notwithstanding, Lee (37) suggested that the value of an educational activity is not to be seen only in its results as measured several years later.

**Bilingualism.** Although FLES is almost dead in non-bilingual communities, foreign language instruction in bilingual settings is very much alive. In some of these settings the target language not only is taught as an end in itself but is used along with the native language as a vehicle of instruction.

Since the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII, 1967-68) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, bilingual programs in the United States have grown rapidly. In 1973, almost 130,000 pupils participated in 209 programs funded under Title VII. This fostered state and local support such as that of the 1975 Illinois General Assembly, which appropriated $6,000,000 for bilingual education. The U.S. Supreme Court has also influenced the situation with its 1974 *Lau* vs. *Nichols* decision, which affirmed the right of students whose native language is other than English to an appropriate edu-

cational program. In practice, the *Lau* decision has mandated linguistically comprehensible education for children of limited English-speaking ability.

Today, several states (Massachusetts, Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, Florida) have legislation making bilingual education mandatory whenever there are concentrations of children of limited English-speaking ability.

Although the majority of the state or federal bilingual programs are transitional in nature—that is, designed to prepare the non-English-speaking learner to become a full participant in the English-speaking classroom—the very presence of these programs has influenced the monolingual population to want to participate. Adcock (1) mentioned the Milwaukee Public Schools' Spanish K-6 bilingual/bicultural program, which is open to both Spanish-dominant children and English-dominant children whose parents would like to have them develop skills in two languages as well as an appreciation for more than one culture. Adcock also described the Cincinnati Public Schools' K-6 bilingual/bicultural program in French, German, and Spanish for students who almost exclusively speak English. The presence of the latter program is highly significant in that it was not established to meet the language needs of a bilingual community.

## The Learner

In addition to fostering curricular and instructional changes, the decade of the 1970's has witnessed an increasing interest in identifying student learning styles. This trend no doubt has been engendered partially by the individualized instruction movement within the foreign language teaching profession. By asking students to think aloud while doing exercises for their French class, Hosenfeld (21) found important differences between what teachers think the students are learning from working on a particular exercise and what is actually going on in the students' minds. For instance, in completing grammar exercises, students paid little attention to the context if it was not necessary to complete the task.

In the area of cognitive style mapping, Lepke (38), using the Cognitive Preference Inventory developed by Hill (20), found that there is a demonstrable and significant relationship between learning style and foreign language achievement. A very simple and useful instrument for identifying learning styles in foreign language learning has been developed by Reinert (47). Entitled the *Edmonds Learning Style Identification Exercise* (ELSIE), the instrument can be administered, scored, and used for preliminary evaluation by a classroom teacher in less than a half hour. Research data gathered with this instrument clearly show that differences between individuals are far more extensive and much deeper than heretofore assumed. By analyzing data from the components of the instrument (visualization, written word, listening, and activity), the teacher can adapt classroom procedures to individual student needs.

## The Teacher

What are some implications of research for the classroom practice of foreign language teachers? Moskowitz (41) studied the classroom interaction of 11 teachers who were identified as outstanding in a survey of former students and compared these with a group of 11 "typical" foreign language teachers. The Flint system of interaction analysis as well as anecdotal records were used to collect data during four different lessons for each teacher. Data from 88 observations enabled Moskowitz to identify some of the characteristics that typify the classroom interaction of *outstanding* foreign language teachers as distinct from a *heterogeneous* group of foreign language teachers. Included below are fewer than half of the traits enumerated:

1. The target language dominates the classroom interaction, whether the teacher or the students are speaking.
2. The teachers have an excellent command of the target language.
3. The amount of teacher talk is less.
4. The teachers use more indirect behaviors (those which encourage and reinforce student participation), whether communicating in the foreign language, English, or nonverbally.
5. There is more laughter in their classes.
6. The teachers personalize the content more.
7. Students exhibit more outward signs of enthusiasm to participate.
8. Student behavior is criticized very little.
9. Fewer routine tasks are carried out by the teachers.
10. There is a greater amount of warmup questions, review, and focusing on the skill of speaking.
11. There are a greater number of different activities per lesson.
12. When correcting student errors, the teachers do so gently.
13. Students assist the teacher more in setting up and running equipment (41: 156-57).

The aspect of teaching which was overlooked is the role of culture in the classes of the teachers observed.

According to Carroll, high-quality foreign language instruction includes:

1. Setting up pleasant and interesting learning conditions in which students feel they are making progress toward their goals and having their efforts rewarded
2. Making the instruction as meaningful as possible by making the foreign language come alive in meaningful communication situations
3. Making sure students understand what they are to learn
4. Trying to predict the effect of instructional presentations on students' minds

5. Intellectualizing foreign language learning tasks in early stages by providing explanations of material to be learned

6. Providing ample and varied opportunities to practice and perfect what has been learned (8: 143).

Although the inherent value of foreign language learning to American education may not as yet be fully appreciated, in the seventies teachers are working successfully to meet the varied needs of all students. In doing so, they are helping to enhance the importance of foreign languages throughout American education.

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# 5. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Harry L. Gradman

THE combination of recent U.S. court decisions, increased numbers of non-native speakers of English, and expanded overseas job possibilities in the face of decreased domestic opportunities has intensified interest in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. While not a new field of instruction, its importance has been enhanced because of the 1974 *Lau-Nichols* (27) decision. Essentially, the U.S. Supreme Court stated in that decision that students are entitled to education in a language they understand.

## EFL Instruction

While it is not clear at present how these children whose native language is not English can best be taught, some language specialists contend they should undergo intensive English language training so that they can understand the materials being presented to their English-speaking classmates. Others contend they should be taught by teachers proficient both in the students' native language and in English. Regardless of the view one accepts, English as a second language is in the process of becoming an integral part of the curriculum.[3]

**The increased need for teaching English as a second language.** One reason for teaching English as a second language is the increasing number of American public school children who are not native speakers of English.

With the close of the Vietnam War, a large number of refugees from southeast Asia, many of whom knew little or no English, came to this country. The host communities in which they have settled are recognizing that new instructional programs must be devised. In response to this need, materials such

[3] So recent is the work in establishing needs in this area that the National Center for Education Statistics is only now in the process of compiling data on the availability of teacher training in English as a second language, both for the purpose of contributing to a report to the President and Congress on the state of bilingual education, and for suggesting program evaluation and funding.

as those provided for Vietnamese by the Center for Applied Linguistics (44) were rushed into print, and workshops were rapidly set up in order to provide necessary assistance for teachers beleaguered by new students, none of whom could communicate in English.

Because of changes in immigration laws, new arrivals in the United States are quite different from many of the past half-century. Many new residents either do not speak English or they have dependents who do not speak English. Since the value of the American dollar has changed in relationship to currencies of other countries, foreigners now find it less costly to visit at length, or to study, in the United States. As a result of increases in the number of foreign visitors and students, many of whom bring dependents, there is a need to help those who speak little or no English. Of particular note is the increased number of foreign students from the oil-rich countries, ranging from the Middle East to Venezuela. They and their dependents must learn the language in order to profit fully from the investment made in their education in this country.

The impact on many school systems of children who speak little or no English has been monumental. Consider, for example, the school system which serves Bloomington, Indiana, the location of Indiana University. For the past two years, one school in the University district has seen a sudden and unexpected enrollment approaching 150 non-native speakers of English. In a school of just under 750 students, the problems and adjustments have been substantial; nor is the situation unique.

Finally, the job market itself has played an important role in the increased interest in English as a second or foreign language. While employment prospects for teachers in the United States have at times been difficult, opportunities for teachers abroad, particularly in developing areas around the world, have been increasing. English-speaking teachers experienced with non-native speakers have become sought after, are paid good wages, and have opportunities for world travel. As one result, programs preparing multi- or bilingual teachers find their enrollments increasing yearly.

**Linguistics and EFL.** Several influential linguists of the structuralist era, such as C. C. Fries, also participated directly in the formalization of the audio-lingual method of language teaching with English as the foreign language tool. In some ways EFL has been the testing ground for the application of linguistics to language teaching methodology. Similarly, second language acquisition theory, such as it is, has been advanced especially within the past decade or so by researchers with a particular focus on English as a foreign language—for example, Corder (8), Oller (30, 31, 32), Richards (36, 37), Selinker (38, 39), and Spolsky (41, 42), to name a few.

## Research Related to EFL

Perhaps of most interest with regard to foreign language teaching is work recently done in four areas: (a) second language acquisition, (b) contrastive and error analysis,[4] (c) sociolinguistics, and (d) language testing. In no area, however, has research been exhaustive or even extensive. Research direction and methodology have changed almost as drastically as the theory of linguistics itself. For example, just as first language acquisition studies have begun to focus on process and creativity, characterized by a universal developmental sequence (McNeill, 28, 29; Brown, 4, 5; Slobin, 40), so too have studies of second language learners necessarily required observation, via the case study approach, without preconceived notions as to the deficiency model of the learner.

**Children and second languages.** Children seem to acquire second or third languages in much the same way they do their first language. Studies of children performing in foreign languages indicate many structures similar to those employed by native speakers learning those same languages.

It has also been suggested that adults, too, may learn a second language in the same manner as children. Corder (8), for example, postulated a similar model of language acquisition for first and second language learners. Selinker (39) suggested the term "interlanguage" to characterize the relationships experienced by second language learners. Presumably they go through stages similar to those encountered in first language acquisition. Richards (36, 37) supported Selinker's notion by citing examples of similar performance by second language learners from a variety of different native language backgrounds. He suggested, as have others (for example, Selinker, 39; Corder, 8; Gradman, 20; Gradman and Gaies, 23), that many errors exhibited by second language learners can be attributed to strategies common to language learners. These include such things as overgeneralization and simplification, and not the interference of a first language. In a case study of an adult learning English as a foreign language, Hanania (25) added further supportive evidence of such a notion, as did Hanania and Gradman (26).

**Adult studies.** The number of studies of adults acquiring second languages is even smaller than the number of studies of children learning second languages. Also, since such studies often require the collection of data over a period of time, the results are necessarily slow in coming. Suffice it to say that recent studies show interesting similarities in language acquisition, regardless of the native language background or number of languages being acquired.

[4] Contrastive analysis requires the examination of second language errors in terms of the student's native language, whereas error analysis involves the examination of second language errors from a variety of potential influences.

These studies have created a renewed interest in an area now generally characterized as "error analysis." Put quite simply, error analysis is an expansion of the once more popular differential analysis technique known as "contrastive analysis" (see footnote 4 for definitions). Formerly it was popular to compare the native language of the students with the target or second language—the language to be learned—in an attempt to predict errors that would be made by second language learners. With evidence from recent language acquisition studies, as well as with other considerations of the merits of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Gradman, 19, 22; Oller, 30; Selinker, 38), the focus has shifted to studies of errors made by second language learners without preconceived frameworks for collection of data as restrictive as those of the contrastive analysis hypothesis.

Once again, not only do the results tend to support notions about the similarities between first and second language acquisition, but they also reemphasize a difficulty quite often overlooked in the reporting of second language acquisition research: *methods of linguistic analysis are not necessarily secure enough for the accurate reporting of actual language performance.* As helpful as linguistic models may be for the formulation of psycholinguistic models, the tools for analysis are not precise enough for totally accurate characterization of the real linguistic performance of second language learners. Inferences are made which seem reasonable, given the limitations of the tools, but it should be remembered that linguistic research in second language learning remains to a large degree speculative.

**Sociolinguistic inquiries.** Sociolinguistic studies have had their greatest impact on attempts to point out and characterize the wide range of factors that influence the acquisition of second languages. One of these factors, recognized for some time now, is that the *attitudes* of language learners toward the target language (and the target language community!) affect the likelihood of success in second language learning (Gardner and Lambert, 18; Ervin-Tripp, 13). In general, a person who identifies with the target language community and its culture sees the acquisition of a second language as a means of enhancing that identification. If one has an "instrumental" or "utilitarian" concept, learning may be slower. In other words, the second language is learned less rapidly when merely seen as useful in education or employment than when the learner has "cultural rapport."

Attitudes of parents toward the languages being learned seem to influence their children. Hence it often is the parents' orientation, as transmitted to children, that initially influences their learning of a second language (Aguirre-Carrasco, 2; Abbashar, 1). At the same time, it must be made clear that learners of second languages have been successful with either type of orientation predominating (Spolsky, 41; Gardner, 17; Gardner and Lambert, 18; Anisfeld and

Lambert, 3). In short, a number of studies have shown a relationship between interest, motivation, and the grades earned in EFL classrooms (Politzer, 34; Pimsleur, 33).

**Should dialects be legitimatized?** We lately have been reminded that problems of teaching the so-called standard dialect to speakers of other dialects is not unique to the United States, and that solutions offered in other settings may be appropriate for this country as well. Now and throughout history, as Fishman and Lueders-Salmon (14) pointed out, it has not been unusual for school children to learn to read and write in a language different from that used at home. Apparently, the solutions others have reached suggest that rather than trying to eradicate dialects, it would be better to try legitimatizing dialects in practice as well as in theory—and for students and teachers alike. We are reminded, too, that properly implemented immersion programs, such as those that have been carried out in Canada and to a lesser extent in the United States, show a high degree of success when the child who speaks a different language or dialect from the target is not ostracized through sometimes well-meaning but usually embarrassing attention (Cohen and Swain, 7).

**Language testing.** An interesting intersection between language theory and language teaching is found in the area of language testing. Diagnosis and evaluation are indispensable to the proper placement and advancement of language students. Recent research in language testing has been as impressive for what it has shown us about language behavior itself as for what it has shown us about language testing. We have seen, for instance, that the "cloze" or structured "fill-in" type test seems to be a good predictor of overall language abilities (Oller and Conrad, 32). These so-called "reduced redundancy" techniques, where a part of the message is obscured, either aurally or in writing, indicate that the more advanced the language learner, the better he or she can make predictions as to the message, and consequently the less ideal the conditions for language behavior need to be (Spolsky et al., 42; Gradman, 21; Gradman and Spolsky, 24). Several writers have suggested that native and non-native speakers alike can communicate with essentially the same amount of background interference, thus arguing against the notion that language learning must take place under particularly sterile laboratory conditions (Gaies, Gradman, and Spolsky, 15; Gradman and Spolsky, 24).

Interest also has shifted to functionally-oriented language tests, as opposed to the more discrete[5] tests of the fifties and early sixties. Dictation tests in language, for instance, are reported to be useful because they reflect the degree to which the second language learner is able to process and replicate a native

[5] Discrete-point language tests focus on only one identifiable linguistic problem in each test item.

speaker's words and phrases (Oller, 31). Subjective tests, such as the oral interview or written composition, are thought to provide better samples of one's language abilities than tests of particular sounds and grammatical points, the understanding and analysis of which remain in considerable dispute among linguists and applied linguists alike.

Summary. This résumé of research has reflected a notion that has begun to permeate advanced studies in the area of English as a foreign language, and —indeed—in all second language acquisition. The notion is this: there are far too many limitations in current research to make a compelling case for any one "best" procedure. Current work, either cited or ongoing, as suggested in an article by Tarone, Swain, and Fathman (43), has yet to come of age. They pointed out that (a) the linguistic scope of current studies is limited, (b) information on cognitive processes and learning strategies is at best limited, (c) we are just beginning to identify the role of individual variables in second language learning as well as the role of social and environmental variables, (d) there is no standard methodology for data analysis, and (e) very few studies have been replicated.

They identified more specifically reasons supporting Chomsky's skepticism during the sixties over the rush to apply linguistic theory before it was verified through research and practice. He reminded us, "It is possible—even likely—that principles of psychology and linguistics, and research in these disciplines, may supply insights useful to the language teacher. But this must not be demonstrated, and cannot be presumed. It is the language teacher himself who must validate or refute any specific proposal. There is very little in psychology or linguistics that he can accept on faith" (6: 45).

Yet this is one of the reasons language learning research is so exciting. It remains an area where the probing of the practitioner is crucial at all levels: selection, presentation, evaluation, and research. Ultimately, it is likely to be the EFL teacher who will validate the theory of second language learning.

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# 6. Listening in Review

Milton Marten

*NOW hear this! Now hear this!* No doubt everyone freezes a bit when this well-known shipboard call is aired—it is a signal that something of importance is about to be said. What of importance have we learned about listening?

It was as recently as 1926 that Paul Rankin began the systematic study of listening. Since that time research in this area of communication has increased steadily in quantity and quality as our "symbol-saturated society" began to become more efficient and to understand that the act of listening is more than a developmental facet of maturation which instruction presumably could not change. Although the quantity of research in this area does not begin to rival that in reading, more and more scholarly attention has been given to listening.

As Chapter One indicated, trends in listening research mirror the problems in education in general, as well as reflect the changing needs of society and school functions. Although certain aspects of the listening process continue to receive attention, newer studies have centered on conflicting theories and on hypotheses that are constantly being proved or disproved.

This review, while not exhaustive, seeks to deal with significant research which has been done in listening since 1969—research too recent to have been reported in the 1971 ASCD language arts review.

For the reader's convenience, the publications are grouped around topics such as the nature of listening, the effect of teaching on listening, and assessment of listening skills.

## Just What Is Listening?

The nature of listening—its psychological and physical characteristics—has provided focal points for many studies. Newer inquiries deal with listening as a language function, in a linguistic and instructional setting. Riding (57) in a study of the nature of language and listening found extremely complex relationships between the linguistic characteristics, the semantic organization of the

material, and the comprehension of the listeners. In his study the added variable of rate added significant complications. Adjacent details aided recall, for example, but hindered reception.

Wilkinson and Stratla (83) studied facets of listening which may account for poor listening performance; suggestions for teaching are implied. Stein and Glenn (66) studied the time lapse and its influence on recall. Although length of time and age of people made a difference, the meaningful information gained was quite stable in terms of organization and saliency. Arnold and Brooks (2) and Wetstone and Friedlander (81) pointed out that the absence or presence of clues or "organizers" given before listening experience considerably influences the higher level listening skills and responses. Fifth-grade children related more to these clues than did second-grade children.

Lundsteen (41), after reviewing research from 1966-1971, proposed 21 appropriate teacher behaviors or responses that could promote maximum listening learning.

**Kinds of listening.** Many articles indicate that listening and reading are parallel communication skills, while some also suggest there is a normal transfer from one to the other. Research into the range of listening skills is far from widespread, however, so that each researcher tends to isolate or to emphasize certain subskills. It is interesting to note that writers of instructional materials tend to be more precise in ordering the skills than do researchers.

Arnold and Brooks (2) measured and compared recall and inference responses, demonstrating that more complicated skills such as inferring are influenced by many more variables than is simple recall. Penfield and Marascuilo (51) centered their testing on 11 isolated listening skills. Their order was unique and emphasized higher-level thinking skills.

## The Relationship of Listening to Other Language Skills

Whether or not reading and listening are parallel skills and whether or not there is a cause and effect relationship between listening and the other language functions have been sources of investigation since Rankin began his studies in the twenties. The degree of interdependence is still being probed, but added dimensions are included in research about learning to listen in science, mathematics, and social studies. By far the greatest attention is still given to comparing and contrasting reading and listening.

Walker's (77) search for the relationship between listening and reading showed that printed language is more precise than spontaneous speech, and could be the cause of the greater difficulty in learning to read. Swalm (68) found that reading and listening are of an equal level of difficulty for learning in the early grades if the material is at the learner's maturation level. As the material

becomes more difficult in relation to the learner's maturity, listening becomes the better avenue.

Schneeburg (63) found that listening to the reading of a book while reading it *increased* the reading scores on standardized tests, while Schneyer (64) found that listening instruction did *not* result in reading improvement in the same skills. In Walker's (78) study, listening performance was inferior to reading performance when learning from reading a book and learning from a videotape were compared. Cunningham (14) described a technique that seemed feasible for transferring learned listening skills to reading.

**Linguistics: a new element.** With increased emphasis on linguistics as a base for reading and general language growth, it is natural that the linguistic principles be studied and applied in listening learning, too. Guthrie and Tyler (30) compared "psychological processing techniques" in reading and in listening for good and poor readers. For average pupils the demands were similar in reading and listening. For poor learners the psychological linguistic processing was adequate in dealing with the spoken word but not with the printed word.

## School Programs in Teaching Listening

Programs that focused on teaching listening generally did not enjoy the stature of those in reading or courses related to a specific field such as the social studies. Often they were a small segment of the whole language concept—sharing the modules or other devices publishers provided. Loveland, Colorado, and Alameda County in California proved to be notable exceptions. Marascuilo and Penfield (42) reported extensive programs in listening at the second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade levels. Dramatic success, they said, was experienced at the second grade level, regardless of the socioeconomic status (SES) of the learner, although results were not as significant in the other grades. The report also suggested that training in listening might be terminated after the sixth grade.

Tutolo (74, 75), Giannangelo and Frazee (24), Rutherford and Weaner (62), and Vukelich (76) explored ways in which effective programs in listening could be organized. Bryant (6) examined the use of "listening centers" but noted that this approach should be reevaluated periodically to avoid observable faults and failures.

## The Effect of Teaching Listening

Insofar as methodology and teaching techniques are concerned, descriptive material rather than research predominated in the literature. Research reports were largely special thrusts or studies from which teaching strategies presumably

could be inferred. Wetstone and Friedlander (81) tested three methods of teaching listening to children in kindergarten and the first three grades. All enhanced listening skills, but videotape was more effective than either "live" presentation or audio cassette. They concluded that listening is affected very much by the style of presentation.

Bursuk (7) compared listening/reading and pure reading performances for comprehension of content. The combination of listening/reading appeared to be particularly effective for auditory learners or for students with no modality choice. In her study involving Title I children from grades one to three, Blackburn (4) found that pupils who experienced daily lessons in listening skills were superior to those who did not. Swalm (68, 69), however, concluded that no one method to improve listening should be used in a given classroom of heterogeneously grouped children; while Goolsby and Lasco (29) found that immediate feedback of performance success enhanced listening learning, and the lack of it lowered achievement.

Childers (11, 12) concluded that listening can be learned—that it is a teachable skill—as a child passes through the grades. Groups who had lower intelligence test ratings scored higher in listening after instruction. Penfield and Marascuilo (51) tested pupils in grades two and five in 11 isolated comprehension listening skills. They found training effective at both levels, with no sex differences observable. In this study the fifth-grade students recorded the greatest gains.

**Affective considerations.** An examination of the general literature suggests a growing interest in the affective or emotional tone of the listening. This apparently has implications for teacher behavior and its modification. For instance, Trubowitz (73) isolated 10 teacher behaviors likely to increase pupils' listening because of emphasis placed on humanistic interactions. Pedrini and others (50) have experimented with testing programs for teachers to increase teacher effectiveness. Their study proposed an in-service program for developing skill in improving children's ability to listen.

## Assessing Listening Performance

A search of the literature as of 1977 failed to unearth a comprehensive diagnostic listening test. Only a few standard tests that provide a standard score are available. Yet many researchers probably have found themselves in need of an appropriate testing instrument to replace those now in print.

In an effort to serve this need, Wallner (79) developed two forms of a listening comprehension test for kindergarten and grade one; subtests were devised to some diagnostic data at this grade level. In seeking new ways to determine listening comprehension, Carver (9) found the "chunk" test or

"chunked concepts"[6] to be reliable in measuring listening as well as reading comprehension. Schneyer (64), in studying listening and reading comprehension, found great discrepancies in scores of standardized tests and performance tests designed for specific learnings. Rudegeair (61) concluded from his studies that traditional auditory discrimination tests are ill-conceived from a practical point of view. Linguistic studies, he concluded, indicate that there are speech sound variables that extant auditory tests do not include.

**The cloze technique.** The use of cloze test[7] procedures has moved into the area of listening assessment from the field of reading, where it was pioneered by Bormuth. The procedures—both in diagnosing and in teaching—are experiencing gradually widening use. Kennedy and Weener (35) showed in an experiment that the cloze procedure is effective in improving both listening and reading skills if used in an individual treatment approach. Neville and Pugh (48) used parallel tests with matched groups in cloze tests of reading and listening. Significantly fewer responses were made in listening than in reading. Analysis of errors in both modes showed syntactically appropriate responses had been given. Both Ammon (1) and Carver (9) used cloze tests; the latter tried the "chunked test" technique. Swalm (69) used the cloze test technique with apparent success for measuring comprehension in listening and reading and not merely skill achievement.

## Learner Characteristics

Early studies and research in listening usually were based on the assumption that most learners were "normal." With the passing of time, and especially since the mid-sixties, investigations have begun to show greater awareness of ethnicity and socioeconomic differences, and of slow learners, language-deficient children, and other non-typical learners. Studies and descriptive papers related to the atypical child are increasing both in number and in specificity.

Marquardt and Saxman (43), in studying kindergarten children with articulatory problems, found that these children demonstrate "syntax performance" deficits, a finding which suggests an interdependence of language elements. Swalm (68) studied comprehension of listening, oral reading, and silent reading in grades two, three, and four. Above average readers fared better in both forms of reading than in listening. Below average readers found listening to be a more effective means of gaining comprehension. Swalm (69), repeating the study with a different population of grades two to four, and comparing only listening and

[6] A "chunk" is a small group of meaningfully related words within a sentence.

[7] A "cloze test" is one in which words are deleted from sentences for purposes of determining vocabulary or syntactic skills.

silent reading found similar results. He concluded that varied approaches for different learning modalities be offered at all the grade levels studied.

Marquardt and Saxman (43) examined auditory discrimination disorders in kindergarten children and found that their deficiencies in discriminating among sounds contribute to poor syntax utilization and to poor listening skills. Rudegeair (60) concluded that traditional tests underestimate normal children's perception of certain phonological elements.

**Listening and dialect.** Ramsey (55) concluded that children's use of black dialect or standard English made no significant difference in their ability to answer questions about stories that had been heard. In his study of dialect and its possible influences on listening, Frentz (19) found dialect users had no trouble with standard or black nonstandard English; while in her doctoral study, Harber (32) obtained similar results with individual black students in grades three and five. Johnson (34), however, found evidence that black-dialect-speaking children sometimes failed to hear certain final consonants, with consequent listening comprehension loss.

**Miscellaneous learner status findings.** McCroskey and Thompson (44) concluded that children with disorders in auditory discriminatory skills need a slower rate of oral presentation. Quay and others (54) found that socioeconomic status in itself did not make a difference in encoding and decoding language functions of children; and Doyle (18)—in a review of compensatory education programs—concluded that oral/listening language experiences increase the general language facility of kindergarten children. Penfield and Marascuilo (51) found that training in listening narrowed the listening ability gap between learners who were separated by socioeconomic stratification—a conclusion with significant implications for classroom activities. Conversely, Goolsby and Lasco (29) found that cultural status had no effect on levels of listening performance. Undoubtedly, "the jury is still out" with respect to many studies, either because they conflict or because more data are needed!

As in every area, there is a group of miscellaneous studies of learner characteristics that continues to hold the interest of some scholars as they contemplate new research. Since most listening studies almost invariably involve subjects of both sexes, for instance, it is always easy to explore sex as a variable. A few articles and studies concerned themselves with television viewing and visual media as influences on boys and girls. A new emphasis, more apparent in literature than in research, is the concern over listener accountability.

In the battle of the sexes, Neville (47) reported that boys were consistently better in listening *performance* than girls. Marascuilo and Penfield (42), however, found that girls *improved* more than boys did in their study.

Friedlander and others (21) concluded after studying preschool children's responses to national television programs for children that the content of the

programs was—as of 1974—quite inappropriate for them, even though many were designed expressly for them.

Williams (84), dealing with the "accountability of the listener," developed a rationale and experiences intended to increase the listener's response and responsibility in listening situations. Williams' schema is much more elaborate than an earlier one by Nichols and seems more closely related to kinds of listening that learners do in typical situations.

## Listening Rate—Compressed Speech

Although its application has been demonstrated for no more than a decade, a great interest recently has been displayed in "speeded-up" listening—sometimes spoken of as "compressed speech." Playback equipment has been produced to increase the speed of recordings without changing the voice pitch or quality. Several "listening-teaching" programs have employed compressed speech without becoming a controversial issue in the teaching experiences. With growing attention to different kinds of learners, as has been noted, the interest in listening rate has not been confined to *acceleration* but also has been expressed in the *reduction* of word rate.

McCroskey and Thompson (44) found that a slower rate of presentation is beneficial for young children and for auditorially or verbally disadvantaged children. In a similar vein, Berry and Erickson (3) concluded that a slow rate of presentation is necessary if listeners have not attained linguistic maturity. Carver (10), on the other hand, challenged the "double speed" type of presentations to improve listening skills because, in the process, the threshold of many listeners probably would be exceeded. Increased speed should be under the control and at the discretion of the listener, Carver felt.

Numerous studies of compressed speech or accelerated presentations have been reported with varying degrees of agreement by such writers as Fulmer (22) and Musial and Maple (46). Klavon (37), in a 1975 dissertation, found students at the college level were able to accept successfully accelerated rates of oral presentation. Neville (47), while testing middle school children, found that when they were simply listening at various rates, the speed did not affect their comprehension significantly. However, during visual/aural presentations, slower word rates produced better learning. This was especially true of those in the sample who were classified as remedial readers. Riding (57) likewise found that reduced rates can be an asset—especially when the syntactic material or the organization of thoughts is complex.

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# 7. What Research Says About Beginning Reading

Linda S. Lotto

RESEARCH and related writing in beginning reading from 1970 to 1976 remains as popular, and as controversial, as in the past. Two developments in particular characterize this period. First, the government funds which sponsored so many major studies during the 1960's have dried up. A great number of research studies reported herein are doctoral dissertations. Second, it has become even more evident that research has neither shown conclusively how children learn to read—what approach to beginning reading is most efficient and under what conditions—nor lent support to any one model of the reading process. In general, the seventies have been marked by a strong interest in the synthesis of experimental findings on the models and theories they are beginning to support.

Two areas have received greater attention during this period than in the past: (a) studies in cognitive style and (b) inquiries into the affective domain. Both reflect current trends in educational research in all areas and promise to broaden our understanding of beginning reading.

## Three Views on Reading

In *Reading and Instructional Approaches: What Research Says to the Teacher*, Goldbecker (17) set the stage for a discussion of beginning reading. She presented three views on the reading process and described the approaches to beginning reading advocated by each. According to Goldbecker, the theoretical basis for reading generally accepted by proponents of basal readers is best exemplified by the late William Gray (18). He classified reading into four components: (a) word perception or recognition; (b) comprehension and interpretation; (c) reaction on the part of the reader; and (d) assimilation of the concepts presented. This long-established view holds that beginning readers are qualitatively the same as mature readers, differing only in complexity and purpose of materials read.

Goldbecker pointed out that a different view was espoused by Henry (22).

He contended that reading occurs within a series of logical processes, and he emphasized the importance of concept development. In Henry's model of the reading process, the beginning reader differs from the mature reader only in the refinement of strategies the reader employs during analysis and synthesis—the two basic modes of thinking employed in reading.

A third view construed beginning reading to be a decoding process, and thus radically different from mature reading. Leonard Bloomfield and Charles Fries are among the linguists who proposed this viewpoint. Such a model divides reading into three stages: (a) the *transfer* stage in which the beginning reader moves from auditory signs for language symbols to new visual signs for the same symbols; (b) the *productive* stage in which the student responds unconsciously to the visual signs; and (c) the *imaginative* stage in which the reading process becomes so automatic that it is equal to or greater than language in providing experiential input.

In reporting what research has to say about these views, Goldbecker centered on the issue of where meaning becomes important in reading. Proponents of the "meaning-emphasis" approach claim that beginning readers must have the benefit of all available clues—phonic, syntax, semantics, concepts—in order to understand fully the material being read. The "code-emphasis" group claims that meaning can only come after the child has learned to "crack the code."

## The Reading Process

**Learning to read by reading.** Hoskisson's (25) theory of learning to read through "successive approximation" relates the process of learning to read to that of learning language. Since children learn language in stages, each more closely approximating adult language, he contended that children learn to read the same way. According to Hoskisson each child has a mind set for *diversity* and a mind set for *pattern search* which enable him or her to process the diversity of the language in which he or she is immersed, and to seek out patterns which more and more closely approximate adult language.

The parallel process in reading is to immerse children in reading, exposing them to the diversity of syntax, semantics, and orthography in our written language. From this exposure, presumably they will be able to form their own generalizations and, gradually, to discover the systematic nature of our orthographic system. "Perhaps one of education's greatest delusions is that we teach children to read," Hoskisson said. "All that may really occur is that materials are presented to a child in one form or another and he uses them to solve the reading problem" (25: 446).

**Discovering processes involved in learning to read.** Many researchers believe that word-learning is essentially associational in nature. However, according to Barr, ". . . recent studies of word-learning suggest that learning to read demands an active structuring and integration of new task materials into pre-existing structures rather than the passive building of associations through drill, repetition, and reinforcement" (3: 258). Following this assumption, Barr has attempted to infer children's reading strategies through an analysis of their oral reading errors. The results show that the teacher's instructional method has a significant effect on the child's response to printed words. Children taught with a phonics approach substituted words that were phonetically acceptable yet not necessarily semantically correct. The reverse was true for children instructed with a "whole word" approach. The fact that the method of instruction does play a role in determining a child's response to printed words challenges the assumption that the reading process is merely associational.

Cohen (6) has followed Barr's lead in analyzing oral reading errors or miscues. Through an analysis of the errors of both good and poor readers who had been instructed with a code-emphasis approach or 'Open Court' approach instead of a basal reader approach, she stated that she was able to gain insight into the underlying processes involved in beginning reading:

> This study suggests that it may be the skill of scanning words for salient features that is acquired by good but not poor readers during the first year of instruction. Poor readers tend to use fewer letter cues. This appears to be a behavior which is different from what is generally thought of as blending of each letter-sound, but which may include it (6: 650).

In other words, we cannot assume that the phonic skills we teach will transfer to the reading process. We must teach some students to scan words for letter cues, and to blend letter-sounds into meanings.

**Reading subskills.** Although many reading teachers seem to assume that reading skills must be taught in a sequence leading from simple to more complex, until recently this assumption has not been supported experimentally. Filp (15) conducted a study to test the hypothesis that a hierarchy from simple to complex exists among a given set of grapheme-morpheme correspondence skills. The results pointed to the existence of such a hierarchy and therefore also lent credence to the proposition that there exists a sequence from simple to complex in learning to read. It must be noted that there was greater evidence of a hierarchy in slow than in normal readers.

## The Method

**Phonics.** Most approaches to beginning reading instruction teach phonics, or letter-sound relationships, as a means of decoding unfamiliar words. Meaning-

emphasis approaches usually use what is called *analytic* phonics: the child analyzes and compares known words and thus discovers letter-sound relationships. Code-emphasis approaches employ *synthetic* phonics, in which the child is taught the letter-sound relationship in isolation and then is asked to blend the sounds to form new words.

In a study conducted by Monaghan (32), a 40-item nonsense word list was administered to 27 first graders who had been taught letter-sound correspondences in isolation. The results showed four distinct stages of development in sounding out nonsense words. During the *first* stage the child does not know the correspondences between sounds and letters, and therefore cannot sound out any words. At the *second* stage the child knows the isolated letter-sound correspondences but cannot blend them into a word. The *third* stage occurs when the child is able to do some blending. At the *fourth* and final stage, the child is able to pronounce most words at sight.

An interesting finding was that the child's overall speed on reading the list was a significant predictor of his or her subsequent rank when administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test in second and third grade. While good pronunciation does not mean good reading, the reverse is probably true. In conclusion Monaghan stated:

> This view would hold that the only obstacle to the child's understanding the written language is his failure to grasp the graphemic system. Once he has grasped this, he can use the ability he already has to monitor and refine any ambiguities that arise from the graphemic system (32: 16).

In other work in the area of phonics, Muller (33) has shown that the transfer phenomena observed in adults do not generalize to the pre-reader. Therefore, training in phonic blending is necessary in order for phonic letter training skills to transfer to a word reading task.

**Sight word learning.** Sight word learning originated in the old "look-say" method of reading instruction. Today most basal reading programs utilize a basic sight word vocabulary. These sight words are likely to be those frequently occurring words that are irregular in spelling and pronunciation. They are taught as sight words because they do not fit the letter-sound correspondences taught the children. Recent research (10, 11, 12) has criticized the sight word approach to beginning reading instruction. The debate turns on how much sight word learning is beneficial.

Since many teachers teach sight words to some extent, reports on three studies that describe methods of facilitating sight word learning are identified. John Koehler and others (27) demonstrated that grammatical context has more value than letter pattern tracing in teaching sight words. In her doctoral dissertation, Page (34) demonstrated that pupils who are tutored make greater gains

on sight words than those who are not, while Robert Hillerich (23) selected a new list of 240 sight words published in *The Reading Teacher.*

**Language experience.** The language experience approach capitalizes on the child's ability with language. The child dictates stories to the teacher in his or her own words, and the stories are then read by the child and by his or her classmates. A detailed discussion of this approach can be found in Moe's (31) article in *Reading Horizons.*

The language experience approach has been especially useful with disadvantaged children, who often speak non-standard English. Siegel (38) conducted a doctoral study which tentatively indicated that trained teachers and community workers can use children's recorded natural conversations as a basis for language experience stories. Although it frequently has been stated that Black English has its own syntax, Siegel's study showed no evidence of such a vernacular syntax; in fact it indicated the existence of a black-white linguistic overlap.

In the opinion of Ammon (1) the overemphasis of phonics has led to the inhibition of children's natural generative capacities with language. He recommended the use of cloze procedures. "Cloze" involves deleting a certain word or words from a sentence; the child must then supply the missing items. The technique requires that the child use his or her knowledge of syntax and semantics as cues in reading, rather than phonics.

**Comparative studies.** As of 1978, the debate in beginning reading rages on. However, it is no longer between specific instructional programs, but between the two more generalized approaches—"meaning-emphasis" and "code-emphasis." In a study conducted by Britton (5) comparing these two approaches, he concluded that, although it is important to teach specific reading skills, the mechanics of the reading process are but a means to an end in the communication between author and reader. His doctoral research indicated that the child brings certain abilities to reading—abilities that are determined by a combination of social, genetic, and environmental factors. Britton concluded that a code-emphasis approach produces greater achievement in reading.

**Factors related to success in beginning reading.** Success in reading can be attributed to many factors. The studies reported in this section refer to factors over which teachers have control and which they may use both in predicting and in facilitating reading achievement in the classroom.

Larrivee (29) studied the interaction among individualization, teacher directiveness, and learner support in first-grade reading achievement. She indicated that a combination of low teacher directiveness and high learner support produced grade equivalency scores a full year higher than any other combined patterns. The results of Barr's (2) study suggest that both strategy and prior

experience with certain word patterns influence the frequency of response to printed words. Besides the instructional method, the actual material read also influences a child's reading achievement.

The effects of grouping on reading achievement were explored by MacDonald and Wurster (30). They compared the results on the Gates-MacGinite Achievement Tests at the beginning of second grade for two randomly selected groups. One was grouped in first grade in a multiple-grade primary situation, the other in an isolated first grade room. The results showed no significant difference in achievement between the groups.

A study by Treiman (41) explored the effect of task familiarity on experiments that related cognitive synthesis and beginning reading achievement. The subjects, 56 kindergartners, were divided into four groups: the control group, a "familiarity alone" group, and two groups taught to respond to two or three symbols as a unit. The post-test results showed significant gains for all but the control group, thus demonstrating the importance of task familiarity. According to Treiman, these results could invalidate all previous experiments linking reading achievement and cognitive synthesis.

## The Child

**Language and beginning reading.** The relationship between oral language facility and reading achievement was demonstrated in a 1971 study by Compton (7). In that study, 140 first-grade students were placed in either a verbal or a nonverbal group by teacher selection and tests in intelligence and verbal fluency. There was a significant difference in reading achievement between the groups in vocabulary and comprehension. This evidence gives support to the theory that oral language facility is an asset in reading achievement.

**Attitudes.** The attitude a child brings to reading will influence his or her success as surely as will his or her IQ score. Yet attitude is a difficult area to quantify despite the fact that data have been obtained through the use of a variety of instruments. It is in this realm that proponents of the language experience approach claim to have an advantage over a phonics approach. Attitudes and the whole affective domain are only now beginning to receive the attention of educational research. Both studies reported here discuss the effects on attitude of differing approaches to beginning reading instruction.

Riendeau (35) analyzed the effects of beginning reading instruction on 13 concepts related to a child's self-concept. The experimental group received instruction via a language experience approach; the control group used basal readers. The results showed that boys in the language experience group had developed greater self-esteem, social interests, individuation, realism, and preference for father than the reader-based group. Girls in the language experience group developed greater self-esteem, social interest, and identification with

friends than did the girls in the basal reader group. Girls in the reader-based group developed greater identification with the teacher than did the language experience group girls. Thus some of the claims of the language experience proponents seem justified—although controversy is likely to continue!

DuBois (12) used a formal method, the Inventory of Reading Attitudes,[8] to compare the reading attitudes through grade six of children instructed in ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet) and TO (Traditional Orthography). The results showed no significant difference in attitude regardless of first grade method of instruction. It is important to keep in mind that Riendeau was analyzing *self-concept*, while DuBois was concerned with *attitudes toward reading*.

**Cognitive style.** Cognitive style has been an object of interest lately, as a means of achieving more efficient learning. Research has shown that children do learn differently. If this is so, then it would appear to follow that matching instructional approach with different learning styles would facilitate learning. Wepman and Morency (42) tested the idea that matching a child's learning style (as determined by his or her perceptual ability) to a compatible teaching method would increase his or her progress in learning to read. An earlier study by Robinson (36) confirmed that high perceptual ability is linked to success in reading.

The theoretical model behind the work of Wepman and Morency was that children develop perceptually in stages, using neurological potential for increasingly complex behavior—from simple reflex activity, to perceptual, and eventually to conceptual behavior. At the perceptual level the child develops the capacity to discriminate a wide range of stimuli. For children with a balanced perceptual development, teaching method makes no difference; but for children whose development is imbalanced—for example, with greater discriminatory ability in one sense modality than another—learning could be enhanced by using a method for the preferred modality. Not doing this could slow learning. The results confirmed their hypothesis for grade one. Due to attrition of their sample, they were unable to test the hypothesis in grades two and three.

Another aspect of perceptual modality (the natural dominance of the mode of perception in learning, for example, visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic preferences) was explored by Robinson (36). First, she grouped entering first-grade children as high visual–high auditory, high visual–low auditory, low visual–high auditory, or low visual–low auditory. Then she compared each group's progress in reading through third grade. The results showed that high visual–high auditory children scored the highest, while low visual–low auditory children scored the lowest. The method of reading instruction made no difference.

[8] This inventory was developed by Roger Farr, James Laffy, and Carl Smith, and described in *Taxonomy of Evaluation Techniques for Reading Programs*. Bloomington: Indiana University, August 1960.

Regardless of method, auditory discrimination made a significant contribution to reading, while visual perception did not.

Sunshine and DiVesta (40) analyzed two other ranges of cognitive style: "reflective-impulsive" and "field dependent-independent," as relating to processing requirements in letter discrimination. The children were asked to match 12 letter-like symbols with their transformations in horizontal-vertical and high-low density formats. The results showed that reflective, field-independent children made the fewest errors.

The "impulsives" made errors because they failed to take the time to identify the distinctive features necessary to characterize a letter. They were certain of their response. The "reflectives," on the other hand, were uncertain of their response and took the time to study the letters. The "field-dependents" made errors because of contextual factors surrounding the letter to be discriminated. They were uncertain of the stimulus.[9]

Systematic scanning, shown by Cohen (6) to be a characteristic of good readers, may be only partially developed in impulsives and field-dependents. However, the difference can be offset by the use of nontraditional formats—vertical and/or low density arrangements.

## Reading Programs

**SWRL.** The Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (SWRL) in Los Alamitos, California, has produced a phonics-based reading program for grades K-3. "A basic premise undergirding this program is that in order to read words not previously introduced in reading instruction, children must have an understanding of the spelling-to-sound correspondences of English orthography and must know how to apply those correspondences appropriately" (8: 27).

A great deal of highly detailed technical work went into the production of the SWRL program (4, 9, 16, 28, 37, 39). First a lexicon of 9,000 words was compiled; then, with the aid of a computer, the spelling-to-sound correspondences for these words were established. These correspondences were then sequenced and stories using these words were composed.

The effects of the implementation of this program are detailed in a report by Hanson and Schutz (21). The conclusions reached are highly complimentary to the SWRL program. In effect Hanson and Schutz determined that even disadvantaged children can learn to read if this program is correctly implemented. Specifically, they ascertained that high overall levels of proficiency can be reliably

[9] In simple language, this means that children whose cognitive style can be characterized as reflective and field-independent will be more successful at discriminating letters because they will study the symbols (reflect) and be able to discriminate them from their context or field (field-independent).

attained in a kindergarten reading instruction, that pupils from a full range of racial ethnic characteristics can achieve high levels of proficiency under ordinary school conditions, and that individual variations in program outcome are relative to program use and instructional emphasis rather than the personal deficiencies of pupils or their family situations.

**ITA.** Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) long has attracted both fervent admirers and bitter antagonists. The admirers claim that the one-to-one sound-symbol relationships in ITA overcome the spelling irregularities of Traditional Orthography (TO) that cause many beginning readers so much difficulty. They point with pride to skills in composition and favorable attitudes toward reading and writing. Conversely, the critics claim that ITA is fine, but eventually a transition to TO must take place. They point to pupils who have difficulty making the change, and to others who spell poorly. Other disadvantages include the high cost of ITA materials and the problem of incoming students who have attended a school which teaches in TO.

In Great Britain *The Bullock Commission's Judgement of ITA* was published by the Government Department of Education and Science in February 1975. Downing reported their conclusions:

> There is no one method, medium, approach, device, or philosophy that holds the key to the process of learning to read (p. 371). The Commission treats ITA not as a method, but as an alternative medium for printing children's books. In other words, the Bullock Commission's conclusion is that reading teachers should think again about ITA (11: 382).

In another study of ITA by Henry (22), this time in Cleveland, 700 students from nine school districts were divided into three groups. One group started TO in grade one; one started ITA in grade one; and one started ITA in kindergarten. The ITA groups transferred to TO during the second semester of second grade. Tests in grade one showed the ITA groups were superior to the TO groups in skills requiring letter-sound association. After the transition few significant differences were found on spelling or other reading subtests. Of particular interest is the fact that the group which started ITA in kindergarten maintained their advantage through grade three.

**Children who read early.** As a follow-up to her book on children who read early, Durkin (14) made a six-year study of a language arts program for four-year-olds. Part I was the language arts program itself (13). Part II was a four-year effort to trace the progress made in reading by children who took part in Part I and compare it with the progress of their classmates who did not. Durkin's previous findings showed that children who learned to read early maintained their advantage. These children learned to read in interesting and enjoyable ways—ways Durkin tried to incorporate into a school situation. The children in the experimental group obtained higher mean scores than those in the

control group at the end of grades one and two. At the end of grades three and four this was *not* true, however.

Durkin drew the conclusion that schools are not willing to abandon their old ways. Children who were reading when they entered first grade were still given preprimers. The school failed to take advantage of the early starts in reading. In her opinion the teaching of reading in kindergarten has more to do with parental support and the availability of materials than with any research findings.

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# 8. Reading in the Elementary School

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THE task of reviewing research related to reading instruction in the 1970's is complicated by both the volume and the scope of such research. Therefore, instead of trying to cover all aspects of reading, this chapter focuses on elementary school research that promises to be of most value to the classroom teacher.

## Diagnosis

Many experts such as Farr (24), Gove (38), Hillerich (43), London and Sigmond (59), and Zaeske (81) agree that the key to reading instruction is early and accurate diagnosis of any problems or potential problems. The most skillful and creative presentation of a concept is likely to fail if the child is not yet ready to assimilate that concept. Diagnosis is the determination of the specific needs of the individual at a given time and includes decisions with respect to the pacing of instruction. Particularly since chapters by Lotto and Bjurstrom in this review also treat research in reading, this chapter concentrates on various aspects of the diagnosis of reading difficulties in the elementary school.

**Diagnostic studies.** Diagnosis may be broken into two main categories, formal and informal. Formal diagnosis, as the term is used here, refers to those commercially prepared instruments that are normed. Informal diagnosis is defined as those measures, techniques, observations, and devices, not commercially prepared, that the teacher may choose to use.

Formal diagnosis is not considered in this chapter except for passing mention of the reasons for its exclusion. One reason these instruments are not discussed is that they have been the object of criticism for failing to diagnose reading needs fully. Among the critics are Aaron (2), Askov (5), Farr (24), Livingston (58), Pederson (68), and Salter (75). The second and probably more significant reason for excluding formal instruments is based on the fact that they are not always available for classroom use. Formal or standardized

instruments cost money, and those teachers who lack funds for such tools would find little value in a review of them. At the same time, this exclusion should not be construed to be a blanket indictment of commercial materials.

## Informal Diagnostic Strategies

Informal diagnosis is examined in this section under five topics: (a) informal reading inventories, (b) miscue analysis, (c) cloze technique, (d) word lists, and (e) observation as an informal diagnostic approach.

**Informal reading inventories.** The amount of information on informal reading inventories (IRI's) is so extensive as almost to create a state of confusion. Powell (70), Walter (78), Johns (48), Barbe (8), and Belden (10) are among those who have presented historical overviews of IRI's that also dealt with the development of the instrument. Powell (70: 2) stated that an IRI:

> . . . can be an instrument for use in the classroom placement, diagnostic assessment, clinical analysis, and for instant and continuous processing of oral behavior.

He went on to say that he considered IRI's significant diagnostic instruments. Walter (78) is another writer who reviewed IRI's, but with not quite as much enthusiasm as Powell. Walter concluded that, although IRI's have been useful in placing students and in diagnosing other aspects of the reading process, the training prerequisite to their use may sometimes preclude their use in the classroom.

Most reviewers and researchers recognize the worth of the IRI as a diagnostic instrument, but that is usually the extent of their agreement. O'Brien (61) contended that the short passages used are too random when it comes to presenting new words. She suggested that new words in the text should be extracted and that, from those words, a reading passage should be developed. That passage presumably would have a higher density of new words, hence would more accurately represent the difficulty of the passage.

Livingston (58) criticized the make-up of the questions used to measure comprehension. Questions should be developed with the hierarchical comprehension skills as the criteria for development; he contended that only then will the IRI assess literal comprehension, interpretation, and critical reading which make up general comprehension. Kelly (53) pointed to the lack of competency in teaching personnel as a sometimes significant problem and outlined an in-service program designed to upgrade competencies. Johns (48) surveyed teachers involved with the use of IRI at various levels. He concluded that IRI's are most effective when used in a clinical situation; outside clinical situations, variance in scoring techniques is so great as to give them little value. He further stated that there is disagreement about what should be coded as an error, what topics to

use, how to construct questions related to comprehension, and the difference between oral and silent reading.

**IRI levels.** The determination of independent, instructional, and frustrational levels is a classic question with respect to the IRI, according to Walter (78), Powell (70), Ekwall (21), Packman (64), and Pikulski (69). Ekwall (21) approached the question of frustration in a manner that is both unique and interesting. He administered IRI's to third, fourth, and fifth grade children while recording their galvanic skin responses on a polygraph. Frustrational level was affected by difficulty of material, intelligence, cognitive style, and perceptual acuity. However, age, sex, and ethnic background did not affect frustrational level in this study.

Amidst all the criticism and disagreement over informal reading inventories, considerable support for the IRI persists. Livingston (58) contended that IRI's are better than existing standardized instruments, with their greatest strength residing in examiner judgment. Levin (56) characterized the IRI as the most valid means of assessing reading levels and went on to credit the group IRI as the most efficient. Hollander (45) defended the time expended in their use with the argument that IRI's provide more valid information than do standardized instruments.

Valmont (77) agreed that questions used in connection with the IRI are of critical importance, but chose to look upon this as an asset. He presented 20 points that he deemed useful in question development. Kelly (53) addressed the problem of examiner competency with a study aimed at the improvement of in-service program development, while Windell (80) made an extensive inquiry into training programs for the use of the IRI in diagnosing reading needs in the field of special education.

From the foregoing discussion of IRI's, some conclusions can be drawn. First, IRI's can be used to measure certain aspects of reading. Second, success and depth of measurement are dependent on the skill and training of the person serving as the administrator. Specially trained persons must be employed to make decisions about standardization of scoring and about cutoff points for levels of instruction. This hardly seems the fault of the instrument, but does complicate its use.

**Miscue analysis.** The concept of miscue analysis has not been around long. It began to surface in the middle and later sixties with the work of Kenneth Goodman (29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35). Goodman's work represents an attempt to apply the psycholinguistic theory of grammar that emerged in the fifties to reading. Allen and Watson (4) prepared a brief, understandable history of the philosophical and historical development of miscue analysis. Burke and Goodman (15) also gave a comprehensive and readable explanation with

examples of miscue analysis. To their credit, they did so in a limited number of pages—pages which provide the uninitiated with an explanation of miscue analysis.

An examination of the philosophical basis of miscue analysis is necessary at this point. Reading, as Goodman conceived it, is more than an oral reproduction of the printed word. The reader brings more to the reading process than just the ability to reproduce words. The word "error" is not used in the analysis, "miscue" being used in its stead. A miscue may be caused by many factors. For instance, the reader may subconsciously be trying to translate what is written into his or her own speech patterns. Again, some other word in the sentence may have helped trigger a response that is not exactly what is on the printed page. Factors in the reader's past also may trigger the miscue; hence even the most fluent readers experience miscues. A professional sports announcer given a page on neurosurgery, for example, could produce many miscues caused by the unfamiliar nature of the material, by increased dependence on graphic decoding, or by the effort to apply elements from his or her background to the reading process. Some of the causes of miscues may reflect serious gaps in reading skills, while others may be inconsequential.

Goodman and Burke (37), working from this philosophical base, developed a system for coding miscues intended for classroom use. The coding system is based on research into the production of miscues or errors, and attempts to categorize them with regard to their effect on an intended meaning. The *Manual* they have prepared gives instructions on how to code, how to interpret, and how to select strategies suggested by the interpretation. Their procedure is time-consuming, but it does yield considerable insight into the needs of the student. There are also several sections of the *Manual* that impressed this writer as difficult to interpret.

Dempsey (16) suggested miscue analysis coupled with consideration of reader style and reader attitude as inferred from individual conferences. She also recommended sight word testing. This, it would seem, is contrary to the miscue philosophy because it removes words from their contextual framework.

Several authors such as Windell (80), Rogers (73), and Pikulski (69), in articles related directly to informal reading inventories, have used terminology and philosophical principles closely associated with miscue analysis. This is a shift from the purely quantity-oriented IRI to the qualitative/quantitative approach used in miscue analysis. It seems, in biological terms, as suggested by Williamson and Young (79), that a hybrid has emerged.

**The cloze technique.** The cloze technique, explained in footnote 7, has been subject to much of the same criticism leveled at informal reading inventories. There are many forms of cloze but no specific uniform grading procedures

to be used with it. Breneman (14) suggested fifth word deletion for fiction and tenth word deletion for nonfiction. Boyce (13) suggested seventh word deletion but cautioned against using more than just the cloze technique to make placement decisions—a caution which appeared to suggest limited reliability. Lisman (57) investigated the value of a vowel deletion form of the cloze based on the premise that such deletions would be easier to grade and administer than word omissions. She concluded that some aspects of reading comprehension can be measured as well or slightly better with vowel deletion.

Cloze is based on the assumption of predictability in the English language. A reader confronted with a blank space in the middle of a sentence bases his or her response on contextual cues, on grammatical acceptability, and, finally, on his or her experiential background. The ability to provide the correct response is accepted as a demonstration of the sophistication of the reader's language. If the reader is successful in enough instances, his or her sophistication presumably is at or above the level of the material being read. This sort of conclusion is similar to the one sought through miscue analysis.

As with IRI's, it is claimed that the cloze technique is more effective than standardized tests intended to diagnose specific aspects of reading. Norman and Balyeat (60) used the cloze technique with "Language Experience Passages" in an effort to develop an unbiased diagnostic instrument for rural Appalachian children. They determined that multiple choice cloze was effective for placement purposes when compared to the component subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test. The multiple choice cloze tests were derived from material written by the children and local norms were developed. Olson (63) constructed Paragraph Reading Tests using short passages with no more than 10 deletions—mostly of content words. These passages were then normed locally, a procedure which the author contended gives a clearer picture of the local population.

It appears that the main strength of the cloze technique with respect to placement is the teacher's opportunity to construct these tests with the actual material the children will be using in their reading. Bowermaster (12) measured the effect of choice on reading level. Under three conditions of choice ranging from "no choice" to "reading whatever you want," reading levels were determined. Boys given choice scored significantly higher, while there was no significant difference for girls regardless of the condition. Beagle (9), in a study designed to measure the difference between oral and written responses to cloze tests, found no significant difference between the two. This finding may be of value to teachers working with younger children or children who have physical disabilities.

It is not yet clear, however, at what developmental level it first becomes feasible to use cloze with younger children. Bortnick and Lopardo (11) cautioned about the premature use of cloze due to younger children's lack of word

recognition skills. Conversely, Gove (38) contended that cloze is an excellent means to develop reading skills with first graders. Apparently further inquiry into this matter is needed.

In addition to diagnosis it is claimed that cloze can be used successfully in various other forms of instruction. To illustrate: Horton (46), in his study of its construct validity, suggested cloze for use in the development of communication skills. Paradis and Bayne (67) suggested that children discuss acceptable substitutions of deleted words to include the effect on whole passage meaning.

**Word lists.** The use of word lists, for purposes of informal diagnosis of reading problems, should be undertaken only after the teacher has pondered several questions. For instance: (a) Do word lists fit into the teacher's conception of reading? and (b) Can word lists give him or her the diagnostic information that is needed or can he or she get it elsewhere with a smaller investment of time and energy?

If miscue analysis is used as a major informal diagnostic technique, then the answer to the first question is probably "no." Word lists remove the written word from the complex context of reading, and it is therefore difficult to imagine a reading task with a word in isolation and out of context. The word "fire" when written alone, for instance, may pertain to a fire extinguisher, a fireplace, a rifle, or some analogous cue. If isolated words exist in some sort of contextual way, why then present them devoid of any context clues as in word lists?

The answer to this query may be found in research which sometimes has led to conclusions favoring word lists. Among the advocates of lists are Dolch (17), Froese (26), LaPray and Ross (54), and Duzat (20). These persons contend that isolation is what provides the strength of word lists. A reader weak in graphic skills might mask this weakness through the effective use of other stronger skills. Isolation of words, however, forces the reader to demonstrate his or her sophistication. Examination of the nature of errors, therefore, can be used effectively for diagnosis. Miscue advocates would argue that miscue analysis does this, too. It is not yet clear as to whether this is true with regard to the miscue approach; the need for further research is apparent.

**Observation as an informal diagnostic approach.** At the beginning of this article, early and accurate diagnosis was identified as one important component of reading programs. One nebulous area of informal diagnosis remains to be discussed: the realm of personal observation. Success with this diagnostic approach is dependent on the sensitivity of the classroom teacher coupled with a knowledge of the physical manifestations of reading difficulty. Zaeske (81) suggested a screening program, based on observation, for all new students. His proposal included informal inventories and checking on motor activities. London and Sigmond (59) developed a handbook that includes informal instruments,

observational forms, record keeping forms, and suggestions for strategies. Hillerich (43) agreed that early and accurate diagnosis of reading difficulties is vital, but he also felt that the information gained, if not properly used, can serve as a predictor of failure.

One other aspect of observational diagnosis resides in the nature of the information gained. Some of the information may merely be a clue to the need for a more definitive diagnosis and treatment by specialists such as eye doctors or hearing specialists. Again, gathering this information requires sensitivity, alertness, and the ability to synthesize the data in useful form.

**Conclusion.** Judging from the research and literature of the seventies, it appears that integration of IRI's, miscue analysis, and cloze technique provides a distinct trend, although it is still too early to determine how strong the trend will become. At the moment diagnostic techniques seem to be undergoing an evolutionary process. Unfortunately, in education this process often is slow.

Since the direction in which practice is heading appears to be a desirable one, a more rapid and orderly integration of concepts of diagnosis should be sought. Jongsma (51, 52) made this point in a criticism of recent research. It seems to lack direction and definition, he wrote, and commented that design is often weakened by uncontrolled variables and by statistical treatments that are inadequate. Well defined, well conducted, and carefully analyzed research would make evaluation and comparison of studies easier, he concluded, but this is not now the case.

It appears that informal diagnosis of reading difficulties in the elementary school is a potentially powerful classroom tool; but it is a tool in need of sharpening by inquiries that determine more fully the form diagnosis should take.

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# 9. Reading as a Secondary School Subject

Dixie Potter Bjurstrom

WHAT do you mean you can't read the assignment? Of course you can read! You're in high school, aren't you!" and an annoyed high school teacher grumbles about the ineptness of elementary teachers. At the same time yet another student feels a surge of hopelessness and failure.

## Content-Area Reading

Many such situations need not arise since the literature abounds with suggestions for aiding the content teacher to help those students whose reading skills are either minimal or below grade level.

**Content reading—a review of the literature.** Blossom (17) reported on an effective Arizona high school reading project in which the participating teachers wrote a glossary of terms specifically for their content areas, thus providing each class member with a mini-dictionary for mathematics, science, and the like. As a result, the dropout rate was reduced and reading levels were increased. In the same vein, Burmeister (24) found that learning was facilitated if content teachers taught reading skills prerequisite to an understanding of their content field. Estes and Staiger (53), for their part, reported on a 1973 consortium which sought to establish that concern with reading in subject areas was effectively met when reading instruction was made an integral part of each discipline.

Earle and Sanders (45) advised that teachers should give more direction than merely saying, "Read so-and-so pages for tomorrow"; while Cunningham and Shablak (38) reported on an actual process whereby teachers guided the reading of the assignment with specific directions, such as "Skip this page, read the third paragraph carefully, skim part four," and so on. Palmer (118) felt it necessary that every subject teacher of every level be prepared to help students meet new demands in reading and to develop the special strategies those demands require. Smith (140) called this approach "bookthinking," and added

that students need to be shown how to take an active attitude about using books. Putnam (124) was among those advocating a program which helped students express the main idea(s) of a textbook assignment in concise statements.

Herber (77) and Robinson (127) published books that emphasized the teaching of reading in the content areas. Herber's book suggested ways to teach students how to read their content materials and increase their understanding of the content at the same time. Robinson emphasized helping classroom teachers improve their reading and study programs by guiding students in the acquisition of independent strategies for working with ideas in print.

Russell (132) sounded a note of controversy, however, by questioning whether reading can be taught in the content area by those teachers unwilling and untrained to do so. McDonald (106), on the other hand, contended that effective fusing of reading and content is possible in secondary level curricula but that it involves total faculty commitment. Axelrod (9) agreed that reading instruction must be the concern of all teachers in a school.

The importance of faculty commitment was supported by several writers. Bullerman and Franco (22) described an effective in-service program for teachers in Hillsborough County, Florida. Schleich (136) made the point that secondary schools must provide basic teacher training for secondary reading development as well as for ongoing in service education. Criscuolo (35) believed that teachers are already demonstrating a healthy commitment to comprehensive reading programs and described the program in progress during 1975-76 at the New Haven Public Schools in Connecticut as an example.

Ahrendt and Haselton (3) cautioned that while teachers might have little interest in learning about reading per se, they are enthusiastic about learning how to make better use of materials written for their own content fields. Roe (128) advocated in-service workshops where content teachers are taught how to rewrite material for low achievers in reading. Duke and Powers (43) maintained that the key to reading success lies in recognizing just what the textual material being used demands, and devising ways to assure that the students are better able to cope with those demands. Dundy (23) reminded his readers that the most effective reading instruction occurs when the teacher adapts materials and instructional techniques to fit the unique needs of individual students. In a mild rebuff to teachers, Cassidy (27) said the difficulty with content area reading is not in developing workable and valid methods of reading instruction but in getting area teachers to implement those methods. He suggested that a reading specialist periodically visit the classrooms to demonstrate teaching strategies.

Weiss (156) agreed that if the reading teachers helped others realize the specificity of reading skills in various content areas they could then suggest useful methods and materials that would help teachers teach reading in their own classrooms. Although Rosewell (130) stated that few teachers believe "Every

teacher is a teacher of reading," he firmly endorsed school-wide in-service programs to improve faulty reading instruction.

Because of the long-standing problem of providing basic reading skill instruction in the content areas, Landis, Jones, and Kennedy (95) suggested curricular modifications that would include secondary school reading. Adams and Shuman (1) agreed, adding that the main and most important ingredient in initiating a secondary school reading program is imaginative leadership within the secondary school. Sanders (133) concluded that common sense suggested that skills instruction be accompanied by a deliberate and concerted effort to "take the child where he or she is" and reverse the student's negative self-image.

"I'm a content specialist! I don't know anything about reading—and besides, that's the reading teacher's job!" Such phrases as these often reflect the frustrations of content teachers who do not know specifically how to incorporate reading techniques into their daily plans. Figure 1 provides a quick overview of numerous articles in specific subject areas which deal with reading in content areas.

Figure 1. Summary of Articles Treating Content-Area Reading

| | |
|---|---|
| *Driver Education* | |
| (135) | "Content Reading—They'll Like It" |
| (19) | "They Learn To Read in Auto I—Honest!" |
| *English* | |
| *(general)* | |
| (98) | "Conpass English: A Demonstration Project" |
| (141) | "English Teacher as Reading Teacher" |
| *(movie)* | |
| (99) | "A Modern Modest Proposal: Read the Movie First" |
| *(newspaper)* | |
| (146) | "Impressions of the Penny Press" |
| (51) | "What Happened on the Day You Were Born?" |
| (114) | *Newspaper in the Classroom Project* |
| (82) | "The Newspaper: A New Textbook Every Day—Part I" |
| (83) | "The Newspaper: A New Textbook Every Day—Part II" |
| (163) | "Using Your Daily Newspaper To Teach Remedial Reading" |
| (152) | "Using Your Daily Newspaper To Turn on the Resistant Reader" |
| (144) | "The Newspaper as a Tool for Teaching Kids To Read" |
| (16) | "The Athens Model and Results of a High Saturation Program in Newspaper Reading Skill" |

*(play)*
(134) "A Play! A Homemade Play!"
*(television)*
(143) "The Television Reading Program"
*(writing)*
(111) "Welcome Back, Writing"

*Games*
(85) "Games, Games, Games—and Reading Class"
(153) "Reading Reinforcement Through Magic Squares"
(14) "What Do You Do When the Machines Break Down?"

*Home Economics*
(155) "Recipe for Reading Comprehension"

*Industrial Arts*
(57) "Teaching Reading Is Everybody's Business"
(29) "How To Help Industrial Arts Students with Reading"
(33) "Project Bookmark: Reading and Graphic Arts"

*Mathematics*
(97) "Reading Analysis in Mathematics"
(96) "Mathematics and Reading"

*Practical Arts*
*(bookkeeping)*
(2) "Essential Reading Skills in Bookkeeping"
*(typing)*
(65) "The Typewriter and Retarded Readers"

*Science*
(148) "Conpass Science: Learning in Several Directions"
(34) "Reading for Fun . . . in Science Class?"

*Social Studies*
(117) "Conpass Social Studies: Suggestions for Improvement"
(62) "Reading Skills Through Social Studies Content and Student Involvement"
(40) "Priming—A Method To Equalize Differences Between High and Low Achievement Students"

*Vocational Education*
(84) "The Reading Teacher in the Vocational Classroom"
(39) "Informal Testing in Vo-Ed Reading"
(88) "Program Design for a Vo-Ed Reading Center"
(26) "Reading and Content in Technical-Vocational Education"

## Specific School Reading Programs

**Program data from ERIC.** The teaching of high school reading has been complicated by several issues. The most troublesome of these is that educators are not agreed on what exactly the reading process is. Giordano (71) said that individual teachers must establish what *they* wish to accomplish (objectives or goals) and then proceed to obtain fruition of them (methods or procedures), although many school systems specify goals *for* the teachers if one judges by their curriculum guides.

In recent years a substantial number of writers have delineated the work being done in their respective schools. In this context *Effective Reading Programs* (49), a publication of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, might be of particular interest to reading teachers and curriculum directors. This book describes 222 reading programs presumed to be of merit throughout the United States. Approximately 40 junior high and secondary programs are described under six headings: (a) program size and target population; (b) year started; (c) staff; (d) major features; (e) facilities, material, equipment; and (f) cost.[10]

Thirty-seven additional programs described in the elementary section also serve secondary students. In this reviewer's opinion, this is an especially good source of information on current, viable reading programs.

**Bilingual and minority reading problems.** The topic of minority and bilingual reading did not receive as much emphasis in the literature of the 1970's as might have been expected from widespread discussion of the topic. The teaching of reading to Spanish-speaking students, to American Indians, and to blacks was discussed in only a few articles.

Justin (86) studied the reading habits of Mexican-Americans and found a cultural bias against obtaining an education. It appeared that these youngsters live for the present, bow to authority, and have fatalistic attitudes about life—qualities not conducive to motivation in school. Garcia (68) studied Spanish-speaking youth in Chicago to determine whether knowing a second language helped or hurt mastery of English. He concluded that bilingualism, per se, was not detrimental to English language development.

Kimble and Davison (91) identified areas of specific needs in the reading levels of American Indians and developed a program based on rewards (for example, radios, watches, cameras) to improve performance. Martin (100) stated that blacks often have a negative self-image based on a white, middle-class oriented curriculum. She felt teachers often fallaciously believe that minority groups are economically disadvantaged and that they mistake "reading com-

[10] The publication also provides information on where and to whom to write for more extensive data.

petence" and "reading style" for dialectal interference. She was convinced that language experience reading is good for black high school students as well as elementary children. Rist (126) reported on a study in East St. Louis, Illinois, where black college students were employed to test the Rosenthal theory of the self-fulfilling prophecy. With high expectancy from these college students, gains were dramatic in the experimental group. Rist felt that the combination of black study material and the use of paraprofessionals provides the necessary ingredients for the formulation of a successful reading program in black urban schools. Knapp (93) stressed the need for college courses which would provide teachers with the necessary training and knowledge to understand and aid the linguistically different child.

**SSR—sustained silent reading.** A program which received several favorable reviews in the literature was SSR—Sustained Silent Reading. Initiated by Lyman C. Hunt, Jr., of the University of Vermont, this approach requires scheduled blocks of time (10 minutes or more) daily or weekly where everyone in the entire school can read. Principals, janitors, secretaries, and even the teachers read. Only the person designated to answer the phone and greet visitors is exempted from this planned activity.

McCracken (104) and Ganz and Theofield (67) reported on the proper methods for beginning SSR in a school. Petre (122) reported on the success of this program in 50 schools in Maryland where everyone read 35 minutes daily. He reminded those interested in implementing such a program that (a) there has to be a daily time for all to read, (b) everyone is allowed to select his or her own material, and (c) administrators and teachers have to read, too. In addition, a committee helped to select paperbacks that would create greater diversity among materials read and help facilitate the program.

**Remedial reading.** "Students shouldn't enter high school until they can read" is a sentiment that probably is expressed by a substantial cohort of high school teachers. The fact remains that many young people who read poorly are enrolled. The problem thus becomes one of providing suitable experiences for the disabled reader.

Bachner (11) believed that a successful remedial reading program should be based on a balanced investment of able teachers and good materials. Kelly (89) agreed but expressed caution since teachers often use other criteria (for example, deviant behavior) rather than ability to read in selecting nominees for remedial reading. Williamson (160) stressed that the special reading teacher is in a unique position to improve students' self-concepts—an area which presumably correlates highly with reading achievement. Chapman (28) insisted that teachers should weave together (a) specific reading comprehension skills,

(b) materials in the content area, and (c) methods using all modalities—hearing, seeing, and body movement.

Additional specific remedial suggestions and programs were published by several writers. Cohn (31) suggested the pairing of remedial students as an aid in the fulfillment of certain emotional needs related to reading. Wulffson (165) recommended using a recorded Bob Dylan lyric to help provide correct identification of words. Ivarie (80) described a matrix for use with disabled readers, while Gates (69) told of the successful role of a "read-mobile" in which she traveled from school to school in order to provide "the right book for the right child at the right time" (69: 90).

On the less positive side, Bogart and Houk (18) worried about the future of remedial reading because of the lack of what they deemed a national commitment to reading and the necessary funds for curriculum reform. Harker (74) felt that too much emphasis is placed on increasing "motivation" and not enough on teaching the reading skills necessary for successful reading. Evans (54) doubted if remedial programs are a solution for the disabled reader. He added that benefits, as indicated by longitudinal studies, are often lost and suggested that preventive measures be sought. Steinacher (145) contended that instruction in "reading flexibility" is so little supported by available research that educators could not justify its being taught.

**Additional categories of interest.** A number of articles considered such topics as individualized reading and reading resource centers. Figure 2 gives an overview of some of these articles.

**Specific research.** In 1969, Early (47) reported that secondary reading programs were limited, and that the effectiveness of total reading programs in high school had not been evaluated properly. Scattered research in developmental and remedial or corrective reading, however, suggested that such programs had positive effects and that in-service programs proved helpful. In a companion report the following month, Moore (112) indicated that teachers' success in motivating students to read needs to be researched. Two years later Wunderlich and Bradtmueller (166) reported that most secondary teachers cannot predict accurately the reading levels of their students.

Fiedler (59) attempted to analyze reading behaviors of remedial readers after an interval of four years during which they received no additional help. Her analysis suggested that students change their attitudes toward reading as their skills increase but that this is not likely to be reflected in improved grades. Fiedler also emphasized that reading teachers' efforts have a more positive effect than is generally realized. In 1973, the Willermans (158) reported on a study designed to discover whether individual student-teacher "motivational conferences" could increase both reading achievement and the extent of independent

Figure 2. Summary of Articles in Other Categories

*Individualized Reading*

Fleitz and Harmon (60): "Free Reading Is a Simple Idea, But It Works!"
Allan and MacDonald (5): "Recreational Reading and the Reluctant Reader"
Elza and Owatt (50): "Turning to Individualized Instruction: Reading in the Round"
Means (108): "Nine Years of Individualized Reading"
Meints (109): "The Task System in an Individualized Reading Class"

*Reading—An Elective*

Kettlewell and Gore (90): "Readings for Teens: An Elective Unit"
Hodges (79): "Reading as an Elective in the English Program"
Kummer (94): "Reading as an Elective"

*Reading Resource Center*

Schottenfeld and Lang (137): "Reading Resource Center: Programs and Personnel in Modular Scheduling"
Bennie (15): "Pupil Attitudes Toward Individually Prescribed Lab Programs"
Pendrak (119): "Performance Contracting and the Secondary Reading Lab"
Angello et al. (8): "So You Want To Start a Reading Skills Center for Secondary Students"
Urbana, Illinois, School District 116 (151): "Urbana Junior High School Reading Laboratory"
Frankel (61): "Learning Centers for Reading in Junior High"

*Miscellany*

Donze (41): "Open-End Reading Program"
Dramer (42): "Self-Contained Reading-Oriented Classes in Secondary Schools"
Wiggins (157): "The Reading Teacher: Heart of the Curriculum"
Niensted (115): "Pupil Self-Help in Whole Class Setting"
Reidelberger (125): "Serendipity—A Reading Program"
Baer and Fisher (12): "Let Me Read!: Five Techniques That Worked for Us"
Edwards (48): "Panorama: A Study Technique"
Kline (92): "Five Sites in Search of the Word"
Criscuolo (36): "Quality Reading Programs at Bargain Basement Prices"
Criscuolo (37): "Seven Creative Reading Programs for the Secondary Schools"
Gillespie (70): "A Classroom Experiment in 'Last Chance' Reading"
Coleman (32): "The Optimum List and Reading for Meaning"
Janek (81): "Reading the Media: Unit Plans"
Breda (21): "Confronting Reading Problems in Senior High"
Clayton (30): "Success Story of an Inner-City School"
Shuman (138): "Of Course He Can Read—He's in High School!"
Niensted (116): "Read + Write + Talk = Progress"
Rossman (131): "How One High School Set Up a Reading Program for 500 Students"

reading by ninth grade students. They inferred that teacher-student motivational conferences are generally ineffective. Mavrogenes (101) attempted to explore the use of psycholinguistic knowledge to improve secondary reading.

In 1975 Thompson (149) scanned four decades of research in individualized reading. His findings revealed that individualized reading programs apparently facilitate reading achievement to the same extent as does a basal reading program, and that individualized reading programs often increase reading achievement. He added that individualized reading has been used successfully at practically all grade levels. In the same year, Wirt (162) reported the results of field work in six diagnostic/prescriptive reading projects in and around Santa Monica, California. The adaptations and implementation problems observed in these projects strongly suggested that such an approach to organizing reading instruction requires behavioral changes in teachers and also demands substantial extra resources.

The *Reading Research Quarterly* annually summarizes studies in the category "Teaching Reading—High School." Authors and titles of these articles are given in Figure 3 for those interested in specific research reports.

**Surveys.** Early's (46) survey of reading in the 1970's indicated that little change had occurred in the past three decades. "In 1972 as in 1942," she wrote, "we are still debating the merits of special reading services and urging the whole school faculty to teach reading in the content fields" (46: 364). A few of her disconcerting changes: (a) students today read less, (b) teachers use textbooks less since students can't read them anyway, (c) reading teachers are reluctant to try the open classroom approach, and (d) middle schools seem more anxious to teach reading in new and better ways than do secondary schools.

In 1973 Freed (64) reported that secondary schools are not providing individual reading programs for all pupils needing them, and that most states do not require reading courses for certification of teachers. In 1974 the Roeders (129) did a nationwide survey to determine the extent to which teachers were prepared to cope with reading problems. At the secondary level 79.1 percent of the teacher institutions did not require a reading methods course. The Roeders recommended that: (a) all junior high and secondary teachers be required to take one reading methods course, (b) in-service workshops are needed, (c) reading consultants should work with classroom teachers, and (d) policy should require that every teacher be a teacher of reading.

Boyle (20) selected a small sample of Florida high schools to illustrate the effect of federal aid on initiating and developing programs. The two major obstacles for reading programs most often cited in her study were a lack of funds and a need for a high quality of teaching.

In 1975 Hill (78) surveyed reading activity in Western New York. He found the greatest increase in active reading programs to be in corrective and

Figure 3. Teaching Reading—High School
(Reported in *Reading Research Quarterly*)

*1971*

Andrews (7): "Directed Reading Question and Cognitive Organizer: Comparative Effect on Reading Comprehension"

Estes, Mills, and Barron (52): "Three Methods of Introducing Students to a Reading-Learning Task in Two Content Subjects"

Earle (44): "Use of the Structured Overview in Mathematics Classes"

*1972*

Harris and Ream (76): "A Program To Improve Study Habits of High-School Students"

Gwaltney (73): "An Evaluation of a Summer Reading Improvement Course for Disadvantaged High School Students"

*1973*

Williams and Stevens (159): "Understanding Paragraph Structure"

Sinatra (139): "Summer Reading Program on a Point Reinforcer System"

*1974*

Galloway (66): "How Secondary Students and Teachers Read Textbooks"

Alley, Davison, Kelley, and Kimble (6): "A Reading Improvement Strategy"

*1975*

Kaplan and Rothkopf (87): "Instructional Objectives as Directions to Learners: Effect of Passage Length and Amount of Objective-Relevant Content"

McCormick and Williams (103): "Effects of a Compensatory Program on Self-Report, Achievement, and Aspiration Level of 'Disadvantaged' High School Students"

Murphy (113): "Academic Implications of a High School Entrance Examination for Economically Disadvantaged and Other Students"

Snider (142): "Cognitive and Affective Learning Outcomes Resulting from the Use of Behavioral Objectives in Teaching Poetry"

remedial reading classes. In addition, he learned, developmental classes were offered most frequently at the seventh and eighth grade levels.

Petre (123) stated that the actual illiteracy rate reported by the 1970 U.S. Census was 1 percent, and it continues to decline. He stated that the reading priorities of the seventies should be: (a) to eliminate illiteracy, (b) to improve all reading instruction in order to raise achievement, and (c) to refine the existing reading curriculum to meet the needs of society.

## Miscellaneous Reading Inquiries and Opinions

**General information for teachers.** The Right To Read program in 1974 claimed that almost 19 million adults and seven million children could not read.

Shuman (138) countered that this situation exists because educators are trying to make secondary schooling available to everyone. He proposed six steps for helping the disabled reader:

1. Encourage
2. Decrease assignments
3. Utilize group activities
4. Tape important factual records
5. Get students to want to read and put pressure on themselves
6. Analyze words in papers, ads, magazines, and the like for *good* vocabulary building.

"I read it but I don't understand it" is a complaint frequently voiced by students. Harker (75) presented a task analysis approach involving tasks in literal, inferential, and/or critical understanding. Peters (121) saw the need for a comprehensive approach and utilized a model portraying the content teacher as the focus, with reading teachers available on call.

Axelrod (10) questioned whether students don't have a right *not* to read, and conjectured whether teachers shouldn't examine themselves before dealing with students and reaching decisions on their reading experiences.

Goodman (72) maintained that children learn to pay attention to the written language in their environment which has meaning for them. Ferguson (58) believed a student who is given more freedom—as in an independent reading program—is naturally more motivated toward reading what he or she wants to read. Mertz (110) further agreed that teaching can best help students by recognizing their special needs and interests.

Carlsen (25), in 1975, reported a substantial change in adolescent reading habits. It appeared that the interest had changed from books about "doing your own thing" to books about "getting it all together." In addition, Algra and Fillbrandt (4) cautioned that what the teacher does in the classroom affects students' interest in reading. In 1976 Fader (55) emphasized that, despite the time and money invested, many students still don't read, or read poorly. He also felt that parents no longer provide reading models in the home since many prefer to watch television.

Frederick (63) explicitly warned that teachers should constantly ask themselves, "What can my students do after they've been in my class that they couldn't do before?" A student whom he cited commented, "The poor readers should have the same opportunities of wide choices as anyone else. Once they find the right book, they'll read. After all, they're human, too" (63: 47).

**Evaluation of tests, texts, and reading programs.** Farr and Roser (56) commented on the pros and cons of testing in the field of reading. They suggested that committees study: (a) the administration of such tests, (b) the

use made of tests, (c) policies regarding the release of test information, and (d) interpretation of normed scores. Mavrogenes, Winkley, Hanson, and Vacca (102) published a "Concise Guide to Standardized Secondary and College Reading Tests" in the *Journal of Reading* in 1974. The breakdown they used included: (a) Survey Tests—11, (b) Analytical Tests—11, (c) Diagnostic Tests—13, and (d) Special Tests—23. The following categories provided comprehensive information on each of the 58 tests: test and publisher, what it measures (usually subtests), levels (grades), date of publication or latest revision, time (minutes), and a brief résumé of evaluation.

McDonald and Moorman (107) reported on the significance of criterion-referenced testing as a fast-growing technique for evaluating school achievement today, while Vaughan (154) emphasized that readability has to be ". . . one of today's hottest topics in reading, if not in education" (154: 635). His article reported on the discrepancies between the Dale-Chall and Fry scores and SMOG scores for readability levels of texts. McCuaig and Hutchings (105) argued for the use of Fry's graph in determining the reading difficulties of books, and Barry and Stevenson (13) designated a Fortran computer program as the most accurate measure of readability of textbooks using the Dale-Chall formula.

Strong (147) maintained that assessing skills in reading is not a particularly mysterious process; but he did acknowledge that it requires the exercise of common sense and some organization of diagnostic materials and procedures. Winkeljohann (161) presented and explained criteria developed by NCTE Committee on Curriculum bulletins for the evaluation of reading programs:

1. Does the program provide ways for the teacher to determine readiness?
2. Does the reading program suggest procedures to help teachers develop students' reading skills?
3. Does the program recognize that a total reading program reaches beyond the development of basic reading skills?
4. Does the reading program relate the skills of reading to the total or regional program?

The Pennsylvania State Department of Education (120) designed an evaluation instrument with questions for the learner, staff, community, instruction, materials, environment, time, evaluation, and budget.

Wood (164) listed guidelines to help expose the inherent priorities and values of the operation. Her suggestions were:

1. Talk with the teachers who spend the money and run the program. Find out what kind of people they are.
2. Come into the classroom and look around.
3. Look at and listen to the students.

4. Talk to the parents.
5. Talk to the counselors and the other teachers.

**Closing on a positive note.** In March 1976 Tuinman, Rowls, and Farr (150) attempted to ascertain the reading achievement of youth in the United States. They concluded: (a) there was steady improvement in reading achievement from 1940 to 1965; (b) after 1965 the picture was less clear, though the children of the past decade read significantly better than the children of 20 years ago; (c) it is extremely difficult for anyone interested in evaluating trends in literacy to obtain adequate data (therefore, one wonders where the information that illustrated declining literacy rates was obtained); and (d) there may have been a slight decline in reading achievement from 1965 to 1975.

In short, there is no reason for en masse pessimism, the authors said. They were convinced that ". . . anyone who says that he *knows* that literacy is decreasing is ignoring the data. Such a person is at best unscholarly and at worst dishonest" (150: 463).

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# 10. The Second "R" Is Alive and Well

Joanne Gentry

THE second "R" may not have been murdered as George Riemer suggests in his book, *How They Murdered the Second "R"* (40), but when one scans the amount of research reported concerning the topic of reading and the amount reported concerning written communication from the years 1970-74, it is obvious that *written* communication suffers painfully by comparison.

## The Research Dearth

In a summary of research studies in the November/December 1974 issue of *Elementary English* (46), 27 percent of the studies were concerned with reading, while only 2 percent examined written communication. In the January 1976 issue of *Language Arts* (45) (formerly *Elementary English*), 40 percent of the research studies reported in a similar survey investigated reading, while no reports of studies of written communication appeared.

While the research efforts aimed at improving the instruction of reading are unquestionably of the utmost importance, the contrast between the attention paid to reading and that paid to written communication gives rise to speculation as to the reason. Perhaps it is a lack of emphasis accorded written communication by that particular publication. As suggested hereafter, the lack of research studies apparently does *not* indicate that elementary school children are producing superior written communication; and the craft does require research to improve it!

**Is writing ability in decline?** Porter (38) noted that on February 2, 1972, the National Assessment of Educational Progress report *Writing Mechanics* was made public at an open press conference in Washington, D.C. The report showed that no group of nine-year-olds had mastered the basic conventions of writing; that only the best 13-year-olds had; and that, by age 17, only 50 percent of the teenagers could put together simple sentences, use commas, and express simple ideas. Mellon (31) reported that the writing of both 13- and 17-year-olds in

1974 was judged poorer in overall quality than that of their 1969 counterparts. "Although we cannot establish . . . whether the decrease is part of a trend, . . . a composite picture is created that provides ample grounds for believing that the writing skills of school children are currently in a state of decline" (31: 71). While apparently the decline is not a crisis, the National Assessment generated concern, and a greater number of research studies related to written communication were produced in 1974-76; this could indicate that authorities in the field do agree that the second "R" is indeed of prime importance.

## The Case for the Craft

**The value of written communication.** Though explicit research supporting the value of written communication appears to be in relatively short supply, the statements which follow are supportive ones:

Riemer (40: 702): The student's organized (written) expression must be the goal of his education, for truly his expression is his knowledge. A nation makes its mark in history not through its readers but through its writers.

Cramer (6: 507): The purpose of fostering . . . writing in the classroom is to make a contribution to each child's academic and personal growth.

Cooper et al. (4: 57): We write to find out what we think and feel. Writing is in part a process of finding out—of discovering.

Mellon (30: 115): Despite the rise of visual studies and broadsides announcing the post-literate society, writing . . . continues to be viewed by teachers and non-teachers alike as one of the most important subjects taught in school.

Corbin (5: 16): Writing is, indeed, the capstone of the communication process.

Hogan (19: 29): One of the most important forms of communication in our modern world is the kind of communication that goes on between a writer and his readers. One of the most important communication systems for any literate human being is the system of the written form of his own . . . language. It is only through the systems of written language that writers of a hundred or more years ago continue to communicate with us today. Much of our education and much of our culture is communicated to us by means of one or another system of written language. . . .

Cramer (6: 507): No higher gift of literacy can be passed on to our children than the desire and the ability to write.

Daly and Miller (7: 244): Our age demands competence in writing. Naming an occupation where writing is not a requirement is difficult. Although it may not be a composition or essay that is required, most individuals must daily face the demand for writing competency.

National Council of Teachers of English (34: 194): Writing is an important medium for self-expression, for communication, and for the discovery of meaning—its need is increased rather than decreased by the development of new media for mass communication.

Guffin (18): Our need to reach decisions in an orderly way and convey them sensibly to those around us is contingent on the act of (written) composition. In this sense, composing and writing are among the surest acts of affirmation in a democratic, economically affluent, culturally explosive age.

**Practice makes perfect.** Assuming that teachers almost invariably believe written communication is important, why then do we have what appears to be a consistent decline in performance? Is it that less time is spent in the classroom in developing the skill of written communication? We cannot be sure, since no studies could be located that measured the number of minutes or hours in a day, week, month, or semester—past and present—which have been devoted to the teaching and learning of written composition. Informal observation of elementary classrooms reinforces the notion that much more time, especially during the primary school years, is spent in teaching children to read than is invested in teaching children to excel in written communication.

The need to allocate more time to writing is reinforced by statements from:

Blake (1: 609): Children learn to write by writing. . . . They spend much of their time writing . . . and this extensive practice of writing on nearly every subject imaginable eventually helps most children to become capable writers.

Fillmer (12: 736): . . . one learns to write by writing.

Fox (14: 38): Johnny can't write because he doesn't. Jane writes less because she has more alternatives and fewer opportunities.

Leonard (23: 59): Skill in writing is something like skill at playing the piano. . . . Talent always is involved, but so is practice, for only through practice is talent honed, refined, finished.

National Council of Teachers of English (34: 194): Learning to write requires writing; writing practice should be a major emphasis of the course.

In the interpretive section of the NAEP report, Lloyd-Jones and Winterowd recognized that the 1969-74 changes are real and offered the following explanation:

Students write less well because they now read less; motivation to write is on the wane due to the increase in telephone use and visual communication and less reliance on writing in business; teachers are assigning less writing because their class size has increased and with it their theme marking time . . . (31: 71).

Studies done during the 1960's and reported by Braddock (2) in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* emphasize, however, that mere frequency of writing, without the motivation to write well or careful instruction in how to write well, produces no measurable improvement over a period as short as a semester. Braddock, quoting a study by McColly and Remstad, concluded that ". . . the act of writing in and of itself is fruitless," and that English teachers ". . . should not assign or elicit any writing for the purpose of developing com-

position ability unless this writing becomes the vehicle for functional instruction" (2: 454).

An uncomfortable feeling begins to manifest itself as one reads the literature. Perhaps students are showing a decline in writing ability for a very simple reason: they are not being taught how to write. Hunt's study (20) showed that novice writers gain control over the ability to use different sentence-building pathways through a glacially slow process, currently without much direct help from teachers. As Strickland (50) pointed out 15 years ago, ". . . in writing, one must come to terms with his thoughts in advance of writing. Some of children's poor writing results from lack of help in doing just this."

## A Scrutiny of Structure

**The necessity for structure.** Defending the position that the teaching of written communication is a process which demands a certain amount of structure, Evans said:

> Misled by an understandable desire to arouse interest and provide motivation, teachers have unduly encouraged a random and unstructured kind of writing assumed, on no clear grounds, to be "creative"; and they have minimized or wholly neglected guided exercises in precisely those forms of writing most closely related to the rest of the child's present and future needs, both in school and out. . . . The elementary student's writing would improve rapidly—even dramatically—if his training in composition were to stress language as a means of dealing with the external world—of objectively reporting events, explaining processes, and describing objects.
>
> The first and just possibly the most important lesson the child must learn is that language is an instrument of many uses, and that all of these uses demand of him attention and control. . . . One of the best ways of teaching such a lesson is to require the pupil to write clearly about what is clearly and permanently there for all to see, rather than vaguely about his private, everchanging, and usually irrelevant feelings (9: 527).

At the opposite end of the opinion spectrum, Personke (36) protested that emphasis on subject matter and the development of a disciplined writer may have a dehumanizing effect and that classroom policies should take into consideration the growth and development of the child. He cited Loban's study (25) which indicated that if a child's oral language and cognitive development were restricted, the young learner would be unable to produce disciplined, well organized, and logical compositions.

Other researchers have attempted to gauge the habits and procedures utilized by students who displayed superior writing ability and to determine from these measures what might be done to enable the student with less ability to become more successful in communicating through writing.

Stallard (49) in 1974 identified the following behaviors of good writers: (a) planning; (b) revision; (c) rate of writing; (d) audience awareness; (e) purpose; (f) stylistic concerns; (g) attitude: and (h) the practice of stopping to read at intervals during the process of writing. Even though this study analyzed the writing behavior of secondary students, the inquiry probably has implications for developing a sequence or structure at the elementary level —at least with older students.

Judging by Stallard's earlier doctoral study (48), good writers during their senior year took an average of 4.18 minutes for planning. The amount of time devoted to pre-writing activities for an elementary student presumably would be longer under some circumstances, but nonetheless should be included. Perron (35) said demanding that children plunge into writing via experience, without giving them help in translating their inner potential to the surface in writing, may well be frustrating and impair their future interest in writing.

**Pre-writing activities.** A number of authors suggested that there be a pre-writing stage which includes systematic *oral* language exercises as a means of improving *written* communication. Miller and Ney (32) reported a decade ago that:

1. Students who participated in the systematic oral language exercises wrote with greater freedom and facility.

2. Experimental subjects who practiced certain structures in their oral and written forms used these structures significantly more often than did control subjects.

3. Students who practiced putting together sentences in oral and written forms so that simple sentences were changed to complex structures used a greater number of complex sentences.

A sampling of other advocates of the development of oral language skills as a prerequisite for written communication includes:

Waldschmidt (54) found that student performance in writing and attitude improved significantly with a talk-write approach.

Yesulaitis (56) reinforced the theory that oral language should be an integral part of all school subjects.

Willardson (55) measured the effects of practice in oral expression on the subsequent writing ability of second grade students.

Maxwell and Hook (reported by Porter, 38) agreed that student-to-student oral exchanges encourage personal and imaginative writing.

Martin (also referred to by Porter, 38) had as the purpose of his investigation the exploration of several aspects of a sentence-writing model for classroom instruction.

Using the Strickland (51), Loban (25), and Chomsky (3) studies as points of departure, Martin (28) attempted to establish a useful set of relationships between speaking and writing competencies, while Blake (1) reported that better writing is achieved when children first have an opportunity to talk about the subject. Kirkton (22) asserted that much current theory about the writing process suggests writing grows out of speaking and is akin to present-tense speech. Cramer (6), reasoning along the same lines, also concluded that children develop ideas for writing through interaction with the world of words and experience.

Petroskey (37) cited Lim's dissertation (24), which reported that 85 percent of the teachers in her sample encouraged their students to talk as a preliminary activity before writing. Rupley (42), who drew on an earlier article by Hunter (21), reported that:

> . . . helping students develop their writing skills is important throughout the writing activities and may consist, in the beginning stages, of working on ideas as a total class with the teacher taking over the responsibility of the mechanics of writing while the students talk out plot variations . . . (42: 589).

Moss (33) suggested that talking and listening form the groundwork for the development of reading and writing; and Lundsteen (27) agreed that written composition is tied to oral language in many ways. Teaching strategies, the literature suggests, should emphasize and exploit the links between written and oral communication.

**The effect of structure on written communication skills.** Opinion and research clearly support the importance of structure and sequence in the development of improved written communication skills. Stallard (49) investigated the behavior of good student writers and found that it included structure, organization, style, and the like. Sink (47) discussed the "teach-write" as well as the "write-teach" structure; while Meighan and Wilson (29) presented a summary of research which indicated that writing is more effective during the second year of instruction—that is, after more structure and teacher-direction have been provided.

Shapiro and Shapiro (44), who focused on the work of fourth graders, found in regard to the students' ability to write poetry that "semi-structured" lessons appeared to have been more effective than a "free" or unstructured approach. Martin (28) concentrated on sentence writing skills. He reported that a sequential, structured, and linguistically-oriented program which emphasized the relationships between written and oral sentences produced significantly greater achievement in sentence construction. Other writings supporting structure included those of:

Sweet (52), who recommended that since figurative language is a component of a high-quality written product, instruction in the use and understanding of figurative language should be built into composition programs for grades four through six

Fisher (13), who concluded that including sentence-combining exercises in instruction did enable students in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades to write more maturely than they did before the experiment

Hunt (20), who recommended an approach he called "sentence combining" to enable a novice writer to gain control over the ability to use different sentence-building pathways

National Council of Teachers of English (34), which in 1975 issued an official statement indicating that instruction in writing techniques and rhetorical strategies should be part of the writing course adjusted to the age and need of the students

Fillmer (12), who contended that through the statement of specific objectives, the careful examination of literary models, and the study of specific structural elements, pupils learn about the mechanical aspects of composition

Robards (41), whose doctoral study pointed out that pre- and in-service programs should focus on developing teacher competencies in structuring the teaching of composition to elementary pupils.

**The role of literature in composition.** The use of literature as a stimulus during the pre-writing activities is widely advocated and reported. Everts (10), Sebasta (43), and Thompson (53) are among those who called attention to the interrelationship of composition and literature in the elementary grades. Each of the three directed a segment of the *Nebraska Curriculum for English.* This document presents a comprehensive program based on the use and study of literature from grades one through six—a venture in which children's composition is an important element of each unit where literary selections are used as a stimulus. The Nebraska material is based on the reasonable assumption that competence in composition develops from a continuing exposure to literature of superior quality.

Ruth Strickland, distinguished authority in the language arts field, in many of her writings has advised that contact with literature through both listening and reading gives children a feeling for the style and flow of English speech that is essential to good writing.

Finally, Blake argued convincingly that:

> . . . reading to children not only stimulates thought . . . but it also helps improve writing style through hearing the vocabulary, sentence construction, grammatical and syntactal arrangements, organization, and approach used by other writers (1: 610).

## Evaluating the "Second R"

**The impact of evaluation.** The processes of evaluation also have an effect on the quantity and quality of the written communication produced by ele-

mentary students. Emig (8) identified developmental stages and suggested types and times of teacher "interventions" that are both helpful and necessary for children involved in learning the process of writing.

Graves (16) suggested that the focal point for developing self-evaluative and self-critical powers in the young writer is in individual writing conferences. Fillmer (12) also commented on the topic. If clearly defined goals are lacking, he said, it is impossible either to evaluate one's written product effectively or to implement those measures needed for improvement. He went on to say that the teacher's responsibility includes providing such awareness in young learners by helping them develop specific objectives.

Most research indicates that students respond favorably and with more enthusiasm for continued writing when rewarded with praise instead of criticism. Groff (17), however, reviewed studies on the effect of teachers' criticism on students' writing and concluded that, as a whole, the research does not support the contention that ". . . negative criticism will result in a reduction in the quality and originality of students' writing" (17: 1034).

Objective instruments for measuring the elementary students' writing are included in an NCTE publication compiled by Fagan, Cooper, and Jensen (11). Braddock (2), quoting Lyman in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research,* questioned the use of such scales and indicated they are not very helpful. The positive term *editing* was used by Lundsteen (26) instead of *evaluation.* "The purpose of editing is to help young authors say what they want to say," she wrote in *Children Learn To Communicate.* "Respect for children's own words is thus maintained," Lundsteen continued, "and planning or accepting of a better approach is less likely to damage self-esteem" (26: 51).

## Concluding Comment

In summary, it seems clear there is widespread concern over the national decline of students' written communication since the mid-sixties and support for regarding it as an important and necessary skill. Here, however, agreement in the literature ends once writers have identified the "second R" as a science instead of an art. The question of how teachers can best instruct simply has not yet been definitively answered.

Perhaps the Bay Area Writing Project, a program aimed at reducing the number of high school graduates who are prepared to write little more than one-word orders in a tavern, offers a partial solution. The project, supported by the University of California, is implemented through a five-week summer institute where 25 Bay Area teachers with experience in the elementary school–college level spectrum share experiences and theories of how to teach writing. James Gray, project director, was quoted by Ganz (15) as saying in 1977, "We are tapping the experiences of successful teachers. Instruction is passed around."

In this enterprise, teachers themselves are expected to write during the summer. Lavin, an associate with the project, explained this requirement: "The more you know about language and writing yourself, the better you are able to teach it."

Graduates of the institute are expected to become teacher consultants to their colleagues and go back to their schools to lead the project's in-service workshops. Already there are signs that the project is working. The average verbal achievement scores of students at Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek jumped 65 points on College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) tests after their teachers took part in the program. The number of University of California —Berkeley freshmen required to take the school's remedial writing course dropped last fall from 45 percent to just over one-third.

High schools in the San Francisco Bay area apparently are eager to send their teachers to the project's summer institute and to begin to work on in-service classes during the school year. In addition, the National Endowment for the Humanities is considering a $200,000 program to spread the idea to 14 centers around the nation. Such support is critically important. When money is appropriated, interest will grow! But the real lesson of the project may be that we need, as teachers of writing skills, to find ways of organizing to *help ourselves.*

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# 11. Spelling and Handwriting

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BOTH spelling and handwriting have been the objects of research for several generations. As was noted in the first chapter, one of the earliest bona fide research studies—a study of spelling—was done by Joseph M. Rice in 1897! Despite the time and energy invested in inquiries, however, the literature of the 1970's indicates that further study is in order. Teachers of every age group continue to seek better methods and better programs to improve instruction in both fields.

The following pages recapitulate the work of those who have continued the path opened by Dr. Rice 81 years ago. Despite the stress given here to research, the writer urges readers to keep in mind that teachers are the best instruments we have to test the ideas scholars study; they are an invaluable source of feedback. Furthermore, we must remember that the ideas presented in these pages are not invariably new. They have been with us for decades, but they are subject to constant review in the quest for self-renewal and for better methods.

## The Realm of Spelling

**Research related to spelling in the seventies.** Benowitz and Busse (5), investigating the effectiveness of offering a material reward in a typical classroom situation, concluded—as might be anticipated—that significantly higher scores were achieved by both boys and girls when material rewards were offered. Cramer's (10) study investigated the facility with which two groups of first graders spelled phonologically regular and irregular words, and also probed the possible influence of their reading instruction on spelling achievement. The findings showed that:

1. There was no significant difference in the facility with which the Language Experience Approach (LEA) group spelled regular and irregular words, whereas the Basal Reader Approach (BRA) group spelled regular words better than irregular words near the end of the school year.



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2. The LEA group spelled both regular and irregular words better than the BRA group.

3. The LEA group achieved a significantly higher spelling score in written composition than did the Basal Reader classes.

Nikas (41) reported that children's subsequent spelling performance is unaffected by earlier use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA), while Graham's (18) finding supported the hypothesis that spelling error would be similarly patterned throughout all dialects.

After eight years of research and testing, Lightbody and Day (36) concluded that what they identified as the linguistic approach tends to free a child from reliance on rote learning. Cohen and others (8) summarized spelling research from the beginning of the "demon list," through the computerized study of spelling errors, to recent work which indicates that "phoneme-grapheme correspondences of some consistency do exist in English and that the difficulty of an individual word should be related to the magnitude of the correspondence with the word" (8: 297).

Kuhn and Schroeder (32) engaged in a study of a multi-sensory approach for use in testing spelling performance and recommended the implementation of a combined oral-visual test correction procedure which, they felt, served to increase student attention spans as well as concentration during spelling instruction. Personke (42) based his study on nonsense words invented and used earlier by Spaulding. The results obtained, he said, indicated that ". . . nonsense words used in a recall-dictation test will indicate the ability of children to use phonetic generalizations in spelling." He also commented that such use ". . . may supply better information than the use of real words since the nonsense words assure the unfamiliarity of the stimulus" (42:1236).

Reviewing in depth the literature on the teaching of spelling prior to 1973, Groff (19: 94) concluded that "speech therapy, dialect, 'correction,' or saying words as they are spelled are not likely to have much effect on children's spelling." Later he added that the effects of dialect on spelling suggest the need for a change in materials used to teach children to spell. Finally, he stated that there is a need to focus attention on the task of writing and spelling materials that vary with regional, local, racial, and socioeconomic class dialects.

The major purpose of a study done by Petty and others (43) was to determine whether children who have been taught principles or generalizations about sound-to-symbol correspondences make spelling errors and represent sounds more rationally than do children instructed in other ways. "The evidence obtained from the spelling attempts of the children who were taught the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) tends to show that little would be gained from teaching patterns of sound-to-symbol generalization" (43: 313). An investigation by Mason and others (38) was to determine:

1. Whether teaching spelling to first graders promoted growth in spelling, reading, or composition

2. Whether methods coordinated with reading were more effective or less effective than methods not coordinated with reading

3. Whether direct teaching of spelling was preferable to incidental teaching of spelling through composition.

The conclusion reached was that the coordination or the correlation of instruction in the language arts stimulates growth, not only in reading but also in the other arts of written language. Failure to coordinate the variables appears detrimental to achievement.

Rieth and others (48) devised a four-part study in order to compare different means of presenting spelling words to students. They inferred from experiments I, II, and III that students did better on weekly review tests when they were exposed to a portion of the words each day and also were tested daily. They did less well when they received all words at the beginning of the week and did not have daily tests. Experiment IV indicated that, insofar as retention was concerned, receiving a portion of the word list each day without daily testing was inferior to receiving a portion of the words each day with daily testing, but better than receiving all words at the beginning of the week without daily testing.

Anthony (1) reported on the results of a study intended to determine relationships between spelling and other school subjects as well as between spelling and other variables which might generally be presumed to have a bearing on spelling achievement. Anthony found that:

> . . . neither teacher nor non-teacher classroom variables influence class median spelling achievement. Likewise, the level of class intellectual functioning in terms of class median IQ appears not to influence such achievement. It may be that classroom time spent studying spelling is, on the average, wasted (1: 132-33).

It was claimed in an article (55) for which no author was identified that a child's correcting his or her own test is the single most important factor in his or her learning to spell. This is analogous to down-to-earth advice from Robert Fitzsimmons and Bradley Loomer (55), who pointed out that:

- One should give a child the spelling test first, then allow him to study words missed since this is more effective than having the child study first and take the test later.
- To have a child look at "hard spots" in words is not helpful and might be harmful.
- Writing words several times does not ensure retention.
- Learning words by the whole word method is preferable to learning them by syllables.

- Presenting spelling words in list form is preferable to presenting them in sentences or paragraphs.
- Relating interest in spelling to material rewards for achievement is ineffective; rewards come from intrinsic incentives like positive attitudes.[11]

To improve efficiency in instruction, Fitzsimmons and Loomer urged, on the basis of their study, that educators reassess spelling procedures, practices, and methods. They also advocated the use of self-corrected tests, pretests, and student-kept records of words most likely to be misspelled. Geedy (17), reviewing the literature in the teaching of spelling, concluded that "no one channel or approach is an effective answer to the question of how best to teach children to spell. Each discipline can suggest means to make the process more successful or meaningful to children" (17: 236).

In view of so much diverse opinion expressed in the literature, an additional scrutiny of the teaching of spelling seems in order.

**Suggestions for improving the teaching of spelling.** Langer (34) asked why young children cannot be permitted to use their own phonetic alphabets, then suggested the teacher gradually should provide standard alternatives as the child shows readiness to accept them. Considerable time and study, one would infer, are demanded by such a proposal.

Jackson and Guber (28) claimed that spelling should be taught through three approaches engineered to meet the needs of students: (a) phonetics (the sounds and their spellings), (b) linguistics, and (c) mnemonics (memory devices). These areas, they asserted, should be taught simultaneously through oral reading and expression, discussion, prearranged discoveries, and various forms of practice or drill. Shah (50), in a similar vein, said that by examining the English language in order to understand what the patterns are, students could be trained to relate the spelling of particular sounds to their patterns.

Lefcourt (35) observed that teaching spelling through a linguistic approach encouraged many children to use the dictionary and, with increased ease, to spell more new words correctly. Poteet (45), on the other hand, came up with the idea that when students are not sure how to spell a word, they need only to look for a synonym of that word in the thesaurus—or, if they cannot find the word they want to use, another synonym can be utilized.

Simon and Simon (53), as an outcome of their study on the use of phonemic information, suggested two main alternatives for improving spelling—

[11] The reader will quickly note that opinions in the literature, after many decades, continue to be in conflict! Benowitz and Busse (see p. XI-1) came to the opposite conclusion with respect to material rewards for spelling achievement.

spelling processes[12] and computer programs. Jackson and Guber (28) revived a vintage idea when they suggested that a "Language Experience Approach" to spelling teaching be based on the simple device of having children develop and maintain "spelling dictionaries," with each child's writing activities providing the entries for his or her own personalized spelling lists. Wheeler and Wheeler (59) also reiterated an old point in commenting that a major difficulty in the teaching of spelling is the lack of correspondence between our written and spoken language. They pointed out two helpful procedures. The first is to seek to help young learners recognize relationships between the letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) of language. The second stresses internal relationships among the graphemes when words are written.

Conely (9) reminded teachers of four long-recognized causes of spelling problems: the eccentricities of the English language itself, mispronunciation, confusion of similar words, and confusion with respect to root words. He also mentioned certain long-accepted procedures: the use of rules, listing troublesome words, and memorization through association, rhymes, and mnemonic devices. Shell (51), after making the obvious point that the ultimate reason for teaching spelling is so the knowledge and skill gained during the spelling period can and will be used in all writing situations, said that unless the improvement of spelling in other writing situations occurs, spelling instruction has been meaningless and futile. There were no surprises in his conclusion that one way to improve spelling in any written activity is to require the speller to proofread and correct misspelled words.

Manolakes (37) reported a pilot study of considerable interest that was undertaken with children in a suburban school district. His findings showed that:

1. Children in the sample knew how to spell a number of words for one grade above their present placement.

2. The performance of the girls and boys on word lists was significant at .01 level both for their grade and for the grade above.

3. The specific kind of errors made by a given child varied with his or her level of achievement.

4. There were difficulties encountered by children in copying certain elements within a word.

5. Analysis of error patterns suggested the need for a reassessment of the prominent role of phonics in many of the available spelling programs.

6. The data suggested the possibility that some difficulties in spelling are related to factors other than structural or configurational characteristics.

[12] "Spelling processes" are defined by Simon and Simon as ". . . a number of alternative routes along which the spelling of a particular word can be recalled. Each route requires different forms of information storage in long-term memory and different processes for using the information" (53: 118).

Homes (22) discussed the point that parents in particular and adults in general are hung up on spelling, and argued that their expectations are neither clearly nor realistically defined, but understandable. His article included a sample of children's misspellings which nonetheless communicated meaning. Horn (23) advocated that instead of having pupils study before testing they should encounter testing before study, thus releasing them from the rite of studying words they already know. Ediger (13) indicated that the following are specific spelling strategies students can learn to use:

1. Spelling unfamiliar words on the assumption of consistency between symbols and sound even though no consistent spelling pattern may exist
2. Pronouncing selected words correctly and thus increasing the likelihood of correct spelling
3. Developing a personal methodology in learning to spell words
4. Developing a sense of purpose in learning to spell selected words
5. Working to achieve legible handwriting.

Although times have changed greatly since the first ASCD language arts monograph appeared in the mid-1950's, one cannot miss noting that similar ideas surface in each decade. This seems to happen more often in writings concerned with spelling than with, say, reading. The recycling of viewpoints on spelling continues to be conspicuous in the following section.

**Miscellaneous comments on spelling.** Blake (7) contended (somewhat wishfully in terms of 1977 academic score decline data) that teachers of spelling should know thoroughly the intricacies of the various approaches to spelling instruction, including the terminology of each and related theory-research concepts. Benthul's (6) assertion that spelling has remained important and that children should study it sounded a shade wistful to this reviewer despite his claim that in the 1970's we can expect revolutionary developments in communication which will bring increased importance to writing, and hence to spelling. He felt the media and society as a whole will prove the pertinence of spelling and therefore the need for adequate spelling instruction.

Umbach's (57) article had a déjà vu quality when he suggested that room be made for individual differences in spelling as in other subject areas. His advice that schools introduce variety into their programs in order to get them out of their usual rut was first proffered at least 50 years ago. This comment also applies to Rowell's (49) suggestion that an individualized spelling program can be developed when the following strategies are made operable:

1. Arranging skills and concepts to be taught on a simple-to-complex continuum
2. Finding the point on the spelling continuum to which each individual has progressed

3. Diagnosing problems that obstruct the learning of any of the skills and concepts

4. Providing activities appropriate for teaching the skills and concepts to one student or to a group of students

5. Streamlining procedures for keeping records of each student as he or she progresses through the continuum.

Shores and Yee (52) advocated that a major step in the development of a modern spelling program is the formation of appropriate standardized measures of spelling skills for experimental and evaluative purposes.

Hinrichs (20) advised that a good spelling program should include three components. The first is a word list appropriate to the grade level, age level, or developmental level of the children in a given group; he also suggested that the program concentrate on teaching children to spell 4,000 high frequency words. The second component is the use of an efficient procedure by which the list of words is to be taught; for example, a pretest, self-correction, and a testing phase. The third component is a method for students to learn how to spell words they do not know, such as: (a) look at the word; (b) say it; (c) close eyes and say it, (d) write the word without looking; (e) check to see if it is correct—if not, start again.

## Handwriting

**General information regarding handwriting in the elementary school.** Niemann (40) conducted a useful survey on three topics: handwriting, spelling, and creative writing during the early years of schooling. On the topic of handwriting, she traced the emerging changes that have occurred through the years—including, of course, the introduction of manuscript writing and the long struggle between its proponents and those who favored cursive writing. Niemann also discussed eye-hand movements as well as the transition from manuscript writing to cursive. On the topic of spelling, her review covered the introduction and use of the dictionary, how children are grouped according to their abilities in spelling, and the help the teacher should provide them.

Horton (24) concerned himself with the teaching of handwriting. Among his suggestions were: (a) encourage children to find creative and purposeful uses for their writing efforts; (b) impress upon them the appropriateness of different writing styles for different purposes; (c) use a variety of materials including pencils, ball points, and fountain pens. In addition, Horton suggested writing experiences with crayons, paint brushes, and charcoal. Evaluate each child's handwriting according to his or her personal stage of growth and record of improvement, he said, and help each child to analyze and diagnose his or her own handwriting to see where and why errors that impair legibility are being

made. He concluded by reminding readers that handwriting is a tool for all subject areas and that new approaches should be tried to enliven practice.

Tenaglia (56) asserted that interest in penmanship and handwriting practice has been low. He then suggested that what he called "graphotherapy" and "graphodiagnostics" may provide new means of improving the instructional system. He concluded with a graphodiagnostic analysis of children's handwriting.

Bauer (4) suggested it may be a good idea to have the young child become proficient in only one letter at a time, while Ediger (14) advocated careful consideration of the psychology of learning when teaching handwriting in the elementary school. This involves--according to Ediger—the choice of varied activities which are interesting and the practice of handwriting in functional writing situations. Kuipers and Riccio (33) observed that handwriting had been assigned a low priority by the mid-seventies, and the result of this neglect clearly shows in the handwriting of many children and adults.

**Handwriting instruction.** Furner (16) set out to develop a program of instruction that emphasized the perception of letters and their formation through a guided examination of the formation process. Practice sessions were based on verbalizations by children, including their self-analysis of errors, plus efforts at improvement based on their descriptions. Her findings showed that these methods were effective as a means of instruction.

Westbrooks (58) designed a program of her own that focused on 12 cleverly labeled common mistakes, or "handwriting diseases": (a) Giantwritytis; (b) Tinywritytis; (c) Frillyosis (unnecessary decoration); (d) Slumps (words written above or below the line); (e) "T"sless (uncrossed t's); (f) Unmeasles (undotted i's); (g) Broken letter (gaps left in such letters as a, o, and s); (h) Looptheria; (i) Squeezles (squeezed too close together); (j) Disjointed; and (k) Sloppox (sloppy writing).

**Tracing versus copying.** Hirsch and Niedermeyer (21), working at the kindergarten level, in 1973 investigated the effect of two kinds of letter formation practice—copying and tracing—on the handwriting performance of 50 kindergarten children. After ten weeks of instruction, they concluded that the letter formation of the participating groups had improved significantly. However, those five-year-olds who had received copying exercises performed significantly better than those who had engaged in tracing exercises. Letter discrimination training had no effect on letter formation performance in this inquiry.

Askov and Greff (2) also engaged in research on copying versus tracing as the most effective type of practice for younger children. Their 1975 report confirmed the findings of the earlier study by Hirsch and Niedermeyer (21).

Karstadt (30) expressed the opinion that the young child or older disabled readers can be helped in their reading through a variety of tracing and writing

activities when those activities are interesting enough for the child to enjoy the practice and to learn the word being studied. Sovik (54) studied the effect of different kinds of copying in relation to psychomotor skills. The copying performances of students rated as having good handwriting at school, he learned, did not exceed the copying quality of those rated as poor handwriters. Foerster (15) argued that tracing activities in handwriting are on their way out in our schools and that teachers should drop this practice. A main reason, she said, is that this activity tends to be failure-oriented rather than success-oriented for the child.

**Cursive versus manuscript writing: new opinions in an old argument.** Plattor and Woestehoff (44) conducted a survey on handwriting and reached an oft-reiterated conclusion, namely that the data seem to support the introduction of manuscript as the writing style in the primary grades and its maintenance throughout children's educational careers after cursive writing has been introduced. Also, they pointed out that the transition to cursive writing is complicated by factors that create problems for many children and therefore they were led to question whether a dual program of manuscript and cursive handwriting instruction is desirable. Cursive style, they observed, should be considered for what it really is—a complex skill that is difficult to acquire. Horton (25) also explained the success of manuscript handwriting as an enduring practice in the classroom.

It was Early's (11) contention that major advantages of cursive writing are: (a) each word is one continuous line where all elements flow together, and (b) it distracts children's attention less than manuscript writing from the ideas the young child wants to express. He also claimed there is a rhythm to cursive writing which cannot be duplicated in manuscript writing. Barham (3) took a similar position when she argued that children become frustrated in learning cursive writing stroke by stroke. She also said there is a need to emphasize the similarity between manuscript and cursive and that the first phase in learning cursive writing is reading it well.

Minkoff (39) indicated that instead of being presented as a new skill, cursive script can be introduced as the inevitable result of the pressure for speed in print. In other words, cursive writing changes the shapes of the manuscript letters in certain predictable ways, results in connected letters, and requires that the pencil be lifted less often. Investigating the effect of the initial teaching of cursive writing to first graders, Early et al. (12) observed, first, that the use of cursive writing will not adversely affect the child's reading or spelling performance, and second, that the use of cursive writing apparently results in significantly fewer reversal and transposition errors.

**Miscellaneous comments on teaching handwriting.** Krzesni's (31) study led him to conclude that third graders' performance increased appreciably

when they used ballpoint or felt pens. Riesen (46,47) noted that children responded well to mixing instruction in spelling and handwriting. She also described a three-step approach to writing. The first phase is writing letters without stems or loops; next is writing the six letters formed by loops or stems; third, writing the other six letters that have lower loops and the one with loops above and below. Horton (26) suggested it is helpful to develop a scale from each child's work as a means of helping the teacher determine progress in handwriting.

After reading current material on manuscript versus cursive writing, Huitt (27) polished his crystal ball and presented the following forecasts:

1. Most schools will continue to teach manuscript writing to children in kindergarten and first grade.
2. Increased emphasis will be given to the need for teaching the skills of handwriting during regularly scheduled periods of time.
3. College teachers will place renewed emphasis on teaching handwriting to undergraduates in preservice methods classes.
4. Handwriting will remain a most useful tool—one that helps to convey information, retain thoughts, organize thinking, and record events.
5. Legibility will remain a prime objective.

As was the case with spelling, the literature dealing with handwriting has tended to recapitulate many long-time issues and a cluster of persistent problems. There is one major difference, however. While issues and problems may be the same, the answers to them are different in the sense that our clientele in elementary and secondary schools is a new one. The challenge of p[illegible]ty, the intricacies of ethnicity, and the greater holding power of secondary education keep old topics ever young.

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# 12. The Literature Experience

Kevin Sue Bailey

IDENTITY, interest, innovation—these catchwords resound in every methods course, and virtually every school, in every part of the nation. This chapter will attempt to provide an overview of the quest for relevancy and insight through literature classes and to present ways in which the literature suggests they can be achieved. Attention also will focus on the crucial factor of reader interest and curriculum trends related to content as well as genre. The chapter closes with a look at censorship and evaluation in the context of their effects on the teaching of English.

## An Overview of Classroom Theory

> Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!

Thus Mr. McChoakumchild decreed the type of education that was to be thrust upon the children in his school district in Dickens' novel appropriately entitled *Hard Times* (12).

Now, however, the literature suggests the once-strong emphasis on factual knowledge and authoritarian rule as a means of education has come to an end. As Cooper (9: 1064) phrased it:

> A restless new generation of students is demanding of "all" of its teachers in the humanities and fine arts as well that they teach responsively, that they try honestly to find out who the student is and what he is like, and what he thinks he must know to live in this age.

Burton (4) has also stated that students will no longer accept literature without relevancy, while Pollan (40: 573) made the point that "English Chairmen and teachers seem to be floundering attempting to impress upon their

students the relevancy of the subject matter they are attempting to teach but not sure themselves of what that relevancy could be."

Many English teachers also appear to be attempting to justify a literature course that is not intimately associated with classics. Current writings suggest these teachers are on the right track since many classics traditionally selected for reading in the English classroom are now deemed not only irrelevant to students but also incomprehensible to them. Golub (18) suggested the experiences to which students are exposed should be within their stage of cognitive development. Flanigan (17) gave three criteria for selection of novels that may facilitate student comprehension: (a) readability and availability, (b) high interest level, and (c) a recognizable standard of literary quality.

Why the emphasis on novel selection and student interest? After all is said and done in the English classroom, it is hoped students will retain a self-directed reading habit (36). If our true goal is lifelong reading enjoyment, as Milstead (31:5-6) phrased it, ". . . teachers must remove the main barriers to reading, which are the academic tradition in literature as represented by textbooks on the one hand and analytical systems devised in college literature courses on the other."

**Approaches to literature instruction.** More and more researchers and writers in the field of English education appear to recognize that most of today's students will not be tomorrow's literary scholars. For this reason they are encouraging English teachers to emphasize with students a method for deciphering complex literature and for fostering analytical and perceptive reading (50). The specific approaches suggested are as varied as the novels available; however, there seems to be some general agreement that teachers should attempt to build on the reader's affective response (52, 44, 2). Turner (50) also felt teachers should make students aware of the different methods one can use to analyze a work; for example, literal, historical, or cultural.

One approach to literature that holds a great deal of promise for the English classroom is bibliotherapy (33). Possibly the greatest value in bibliotherapy is that it strives effectively to stimulate both the affective and cognitive growth of the student. The objective is to use literature and the reader's identification with literature to promote mental health, to provide entertainment, to encourage self-analysis, and to clarify values. In short, bibliotherapy is a way of helping a student to find himself or herself and to become acquainted with great literature at the same time (33).

Regardless of the approach used, there is strong support in literature research for thoughtful discussion of the literature read. Inglis (24) said effective teaching of literature requires a "tripartite dialogue" among the teacher, the student, and the writer whose work is examined. He felt this type of discussion cuts down on chaos and allows its participants ". . . to emerge from

it, not only with an extension of experience, but with improved equipment for approaching all the experience that is to come" (24: 11-12). In addition to these benefits, Penna (38) in his doctoral study found that the discussion techniques used in teaching literature caused participants to make significant gains in self-identity and self-acceptance.

## Reader Interest

**"Bookmanship"; mirror of life.** "Bookmanship is the art of adjusting literature to life. . . . Bookmanship thus becomes the faculty of uniting a book with the life of the reader" (52: 313). The idea of "bookmanship" or the concept it represents is one that has the largest number of supporters among writers who have concerned themselves with the literature experience of young people today (34, 39, 29, 1, 6, 18). Nestor (34: 66) asserted:

> When a course in literature provides students with the opportunity to examine the realities of human existence as well as to analyze and appreciate good literary style and technique, it can be an exceptionally valuable learning experience. Discussing the life situations through which fictional characters struggle involves a kind of objectivity that allows students to air their own questions and problems indirectly, in terms of a fictional character, rather than through deeply personal references to themselves.

The novel is a form which seems to achieve this objective without sacrificing artistry. Good examples include Hermann Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund*, D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*, John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, and James Dickey's *Deliverance*, according to Perry (39), who went on to note that literature transcends self-understanding in fostering understanding of the reader's personal history, family, peers, and others.

Such an experience with literature, as Haley pointed out, can prove vitally important to students who are members of a "fractured family."

> Kids who are trying to "make it" in a broken home need to read books about other kids who face similar situations. They need to know that they are not alone in their experiences—that others feel pain and anger, loneliness and frustration. . . . They can learn the possible alternatives that exist by seeing what others (even fictional "others") do. In this way they may realize that they do have lives of their own independent of their parents (19: 70).

Haley (19) also suggested some novels that have proved to be of interest to adolescents trying to survive broken homes: *Deathman, Do Not Follow Me* by Jay Bennett, *The Pigman* and *My Darling, My Hamburger* by Paul Zindel, and S. E. Hinton's *That Was Then, This Is Now.*

Seiger (45) interpreted the role of literature as including means of (a) dealing with human values, (b) guiding students to read and grasp interpersonal conflicts, (c) making value decisions, and (d) adding needed structure to students' lives. He stated that the able teacher is one who looks ". . . to the study of literature as one vehicle which may help the student see beyond his circumscribed existence and come to grips with the social and moral dilemmas of our time" (45: 139-40).

**Additional viewpoints concerning reader interest.** In addition to "bookmanship" as a motivation or stimulant in capturing reader interest, other factors have been found which have significant impact on the interest of the reader. In one study by Hanzelka (20), short stories were rated by a panel of students and a panel of English specialists. He found that both groups preferred stories with clear plots and believed that readability and clarity were closely related.

Colbert (8) applied a criteria checklist for purposes of assessing "content components" of 107 selections for adolescents chosen from 12 leading anthologies. Her study led her to conclude that no more than half of the 107 excerpts satisfied 20 out of 32 criteria.

Pollan (40) administered a questionnaire to high school students. She found the most widely read books to include Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s *Cat's Cradle*; Hermann Hesse's *Demian* and *Siddhartha*; J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*; Richard Brautigan's *The Abortion;* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.* In the category of classical literature *Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre,* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's books were mentioned most frequently.

## Curriculum Trends

**Minority literature.** The effects of the women's liberation movement, of integration, and of affirmative action have left an indelible mark on society, so it comes as a surprise to find that they are not widely reflected in literature of the early seventies. Nelson (32), for instance, noted that a double standard continued to be found in a number of adolescent novels. She analyzed the role of women characters portrayed in five novels commonly read by eleventh and twelfth grade students and found little "model diversity." The women continued to be stereotyped as wives and mothers. Sex experiences yielded automatic pregnancy, and "girltalk" centered on boys and dates.

Similar problems of stereotyping also exist when the male role is depicted in the adolescent novel. Kelty (26: 57) expressed concern over the "stereotyped initiation of the male character who persistently becomes a man when he performs an act of violence against an animal and/or the natural world." For instance, such violent actions are portrayed in well-known novels such as *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson, and Ernest

Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*—although they antedate the "lib" movements of recent years.

Moving from sexuality to race relations, the writer found that Carr (5) had reviewed secondary school anthologies and reported that as of 1972 they gave a misleading view of the black experience—if they presented blacks at all. An analogous 1974 study by Duff (15) led her to conclude that 72.2 percent of the 18 anthologies she examined were inadequate in their selection of writings by black writers. Hipple (22: 9) suggested that we do away with the idea of developing separate courses for "Black Literature." He felt that "appropriate black literature should be included in all literature classes."

Trout (49) proposed in 1974 that we take the Indians off the reservations and strive for a more realistic portrayal of them in literature. It was admitted, however, that the suggestion may encounter opposition from those who prefer to view Indians as always romantic and stoic! Trout went on to recommend novels that serve to expose students to authentic Indian experiences, among them: *Hatter Fox* by Marilyn Harriss, *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday, *When the Legends Die* by Hal Borland, and *Journey to Ixtlan* by Carlos Castaneda.

**Elective English.** One of the more notable trends in English education during the late sixties and early seventies is the adoption of elective English programs. This appears to be the departmental answer to students' pleas for relevancy. Jagust (25: 1325) reported success in using relevant literature and in letting students suggest additions or deletions in the reading lists. He noted the need for changes made in his course since the sixties, saying, "I have changed in these years; students have changed even more; schools have had to change. Any course that did not change would be a dead course."

However, most of what has been written on elective English programs centers around curriculum guides providing course descriptions and objectives. The majority of the schools using elective programs do not administer standardized tests. One study cited by Suhor (46: 48) ascertained that only seven of 48 schools with elective English programs used standardized tests. This is a troublesome development in at least one sense; very little data are provided on the effectiveness of such programs.

**Developments in poetry.** "Poetry cannot really be taught. It can, however, be caught," according to Lesser (28: 24). The idea of "poetic contagion" is stressed by a number of researchers and critics concerned with making poetry an enjoyable experience for students (28, 21, 7). Lesser (28) and Curtis (11) agreed that poem selection is vital to a successful experience. Curtis (11: 1326) warned, "Too often when children play with giants permanent injury results. Sometimes it is fatal."

Trout (48: 104) suggested that exposing students to many poetry paperbacks is ". . . one way to motivate and support the student's writing and reading poetry." She argued the teacher's role is that of a resource person, guiding students in the appreciation of poets who correspond to the students' style or interest. Womack (51) also supported the idea of allowing students to browse until they find poems they like. Norris (35) and Roeming (43) reported success in poetry programs that involved bringing poets into the classroom.

Though some writers such as Harcourt (21) and Womack (51) stressed the importance of teaching the "technical elements" in poetry, others such as Clare (7) or Evans (16) advised caution lest a given poem be torn apart until there is nothing left, destroying the aesthetic and emotional experience that should have accompanied it. Stress on the value of experiencing an emotional reaction to poetry is supported in a 1973 survey which identified 3,500 drug addicts, alcoholics, and mentally retarded persons around the country and over 400 therapists who make use of poetry for psychotherapeutic value. Evidently there are reasons to preserve this therapeutic effect of poetry among our students.

**Science fiction.** With the advent of *Star Trek* in the visual media, there appears to have been a heightening of interest in science fiction in the print media. Some teachers report greater success with this type of fiction than with any other kind. Lawler (27) termed science fiction the "new mythology," with implications for stimulating reader imagination. Hollister and Thompson (23) also praised science fiction, not only for its help in stimulating creative thinking but also as a means of exploring social issues such as overpopulation, love-hate relationships, nuclear destruction, and non-conformity. Reynolds (42) proposed that science fiction be used as a means instead of an end in teaching reading and writing.

Various materials have become available to help teachers develop science fiction courses and to organize materials for use therein, according to Millies (30) and Paine and Martinez (37).

## Censorship

**"The Grim Reaper."** The censor is seen by many writers as the "Grim Reaper" of the English classroom because his or her edicts diminish the chances a child might have to participate in a guided experience that involves reading and discussing controversial materials. Donelson (14: 1197-98) wrote with considerable eloquence on the topic:

> English teachers and their students must have freedom to read and see and think and discuss and learn if there is any hope of reality entering the classroom. Where censors grant teachers "limited" freedom as long as students read only "wholesome" books and "uplifting" magazines about "good" Americans and "happy" things, view

only "suitable" and "clean" and "Christian" films, create only "optimistic" and "positive" and "inspirational" media materials, and discuss only "noncontroversial" and "safe" topics, there is no possibility of education and the search for truth, only the indoctrination into the community's contemporary mores.

Eight categories of traditionally "suspect" books have been singled out by Donelson (13: 48) as the targets of censors: (a) sex, (b) politics, (c) war and peace, (d) religion, (e) sociology and race, (f) language, (g) drugs, and (h) inappropriate adolescent behavior.

Since as long as there are issues and conflicts, there is likely to be censorship, Symula (47) suggested that teachers be prepared to defend what they choose to teach. He recommended strategic measures such as (a) sending newsletters to parents stating the teacher's objectives or giving critics' reviews, (b) forming PTA discussion groups, (c) encouraging a book evaluation committee to investigate censorship problems, and (d) alerting mature students to the views and tensions involved in censorship.

Donelson (13) suggested the English department use problem-preventive measures by establishing department policy and guides for the selection of literature, and by having teachers prepare clear-cut statements of objectives and strive to improve school-community communication. He warned (13: 51), "If we do not prepare in advance or if we do not care to prepare, we . . . will wind up losing everything—our books, our students, and our freedom."

## Evaluation

In drawing toward the end of any scholarly pursuit, whether it be the close of a well-presented unit or the conclusion to a chapter on literature in the secondary schools, the well-prepared teacher knows he or she is faced with the ultimate task—evaluation. Unfortunately the realm of testing in literature has become especially controversial territory. Literature tests sometimes overlook the more important aspects of literature such as experiencing culture, creating a literate populace, or cultivating critical and aesthetic taste. According to Purves (41), tests usually evaluate only a student's cognitive level on normative tests.

Suhor (46) enumerated some of the subtle problems encountered in testing students' ability in literature. He pointed out that reading is a major requirement or prerequisite for success on most literature tests, while "poor readers can understand ideas well beyond their ability to decode" (46: 46). Second, Suhor noted that tests which ask students to interpret, to distinguish main ideas, to infer, or to draw conclusions are actually tests of broader context thinking—of complex mental operations. Even though teachers and professional organizations may denounce dwelling on the factual aspects of a literary work, he concluded that "much of mass testing continues to focus on recall of facts" (46:

46-47), and that some scholars such as Buros have found that sometimes ". . . the student whose thinking is subtle and precise is actually penalized by ambiguous multiple choice tests" (46: 47).

The carefully written essay question can include comprehension and a knowledge of literary forms, lead to emotional response, sharpen aesthetic judgment, and reveal the value of the literary experience to the student (41). However, the grading of essay tests has often been riddled with problems. The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) apparently have found ways of obtaining reliable results, Suhor reported, through ". . . holistic readings of short essays by trained readers" (46: 48). This does not always help the classroom teacher, however, because of the time and expense of CEEB and ETS tests. Also, they usually are administered only to seniors and a limited number of juniors.

At this point one may be asking the question, as did Suhor, "Is mass testing necessary?" Suhor's answer was: "If mass testing does not measure things that are worth measuring, and if the measurement that takes place results in distortions, mass testing presents a false report to the community" (46: 48).

## A Parting Word

After reading, reviewing, and writing about the demands on classroom literature today, the writer feels a strong urge to share with her fellow teachers the simple and venerable maxim, "We must never let the teaching of *literature*—or any other subject—interfere with our main job: that of teaching *children* and *youth*!"

As teachers we have a responsibility to share literature with them at *their* cognitive level and allow *them* the privilege of affective response. The children, along with teachers, have been subjected to a "Future Shock" world; and censors, teachers, and parents alike owe them an opportunity to learn about that world as it is reflected in literature, with the guidance and cooperation of an insightful classroom teacher. The challenge for the English teacher in the years ahead is to justify the ranking of Literature as part of the "*human*-ities."

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# 13. Epilog: Speculations About Research in the Coming Decade

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It is, of course, impossible to predict the precise direction of research in the various fields of education in the next several years. Few of us have investigated in any depth more than one or two areas of the language arts; hence it is not easy to write with confidence about the years ahead. In general terms, however, it seems safe to say that research affords the soundest basis for improving the educational enterprise.

## Three Questions

This belief motivates us to discuss three major facets of research in the years ahead: (a) who will be doing research, (b) where the research will be done, and (c) what the nature of such research activities may be.

**Who will do research?** The October 1960 issue of *Harper's Magazine* carried an article entitled "The Cults of Research and Creativity." The author, Jacques Barzun, expressed great concern about the then current practice of luring scholars from one university to another with an offer of a larger salary and with the lure of superior facilities for research. During the 1960's, furthermore, faculty members at colleges and universities were criticized by Barzun for neglecting teaching responsibilities while they "did research."

By the early 1970's, conditions had changed. Student enrollments began to decline, faculty positions and mobility were reduced, and "soft" money support through grants became severely limited. Reduced "hard" money budgets also led to increased teaching loads, and as a concomitant, to less time to engage in research activities.

The attrition of persons prepared for careers in educational research has always been heavy. Some have left education to enter other fields. Some remain in education but move into administrative positions, while others find the press of the promotion-and-tenure system too demanding and become dropouts. For whatever reasons, the ranks have been and continue to be depleted.

The problem is further complicated by the decline in college and university enrollments. While it is true that the greatest drop-off has been at the undergraduate and master's degree levels, there is reason to believe that graduate enrollments will face sharper declines during the next few years as declines at the undergraduate level begin to affect graduate enrollments. Perhaps even more significant was the termination, in 1976, of the Education Professions Development Act (EPDA) which helped to support graduate level students. Furthermore, during the mid-seventies the tight job market in education fields left less incentive for young students who wish to pursue advanced degrees. We hope, of course, that during the next five to seven years the unfavorable conditions which currently hinder educational research may be somewhat ameliorated.

**Where will research be done?** Factors, usually beyond the control of institutions of higher education, have reduced the number of sources available for gathering data required for research activities. These factors not only influence the amount of research being conducted, but they also have an effect on the nature of this research.

The pressure to mount field-based instructional programs for preservice and in-service teachers—pressure sometimes mandated by law—has increased the traffic in elementary and secondary classrooms. That increase has forced schools of education to do less with proposals for language arts research studies using public school students as subjects.

School policies for granting permission to use school settings for research purposes also are less flexible as a result of the passage of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in 1974. One obvious result of the changes has been an increase in the amount of time required to obtain permission to gather data, a development which probably is discouraging some doctoral students from considering studies that require an elementary or secondary school population. Parents, through misunderstanding, also seem more reluctant to give permission for their children to serve as research subjects. As a result, designs requiring the matching of students or random selection of subjects have become more difficult to execute.

These factors, reinforced by evidence from the past few years, suggest that what support is available for research activities is likely to go to private research agencies or to a small number of universities for highly specified research targets.

**What will be the nature of such research activities?** The best indicators of future research in a given field are the past and current trends in the area. We shall, therefore, begin our examination of this question with a brief review of current trends in the language arts. The emphasis on reading that will be evident in this discussion reflects the fact that reading has developed the broadest research base of all of the language arts. In their recent summary of

reading research, Weintraub et al. (11) reviewed 599 studies on reading published in 1975-1976.

One major trend evident in the language arts today is the influence of psycholinguistics. The relatively young field of psycholinguistics represents an interdisciplinary effort by psychologists and linguists to probe questions concerning language use, language comprehension, and language acquisition. Psycholinguistics is considered by Tiedt and Tiedt (10) to be one of the two major "new directions" in reading instruction in the 1970's.

The other is the trend toward including formal reading instruction in the junior and senior high school English curricula. By emphasizing the relationship among the processes involved in oral language acquisition, reading, and writing, psycholinguistic theory and research have provided an impressive rationale for the teaching of the language arts as an integrated unit rather than as separate subjects. The current emphasis on comprehension, both in reading research and in classroom practice, is a direct reflection of psycholinguistic influence. So, too, is the recent interest in the reading process itself, as evidenced by the proliferation of reading theories now flooding the literature. A cursory review of professional journals such as *Language Arts* and *The Reading Teacher* for the past seven or eight years will reveal, appearing almost monthly, numerous articles concerning theories of reading. A basic reference work in this new and exciting area is by Harry Singer and Robert R. Ruddell (8).

Psycholinguistic insights also have had an impact on the teaching of composition (5). There is every reason to believe that the influence of psycholinguistics on the language arts is likely to continue for some time in the coming years.

Another major trend characterizing the current state of the language arts is reflected in the related emphases on providing students with basic competencies and actively involving them in the learning process. This concern for process as well as content, affect as well as cognition, skills as well as knowledge, is clearly evident in both the NCTE *Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English and the Language Arts* (9) and the 1976 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (7). Considering the past swings of the educational pendulum, however, it is difficult to predict the longevity of this trend.

In light of this brief review of current trends in the language arts, it may now be possible to provide some tentative answers to the question of what the nature of future research activities may be. First of all, although the coming years may see a considerable decline in the quantity of educational research in general, it seems safe to predict that the area of reading will continue to receive more than its share of attention and available funds. Moreover, although the ranks of educational researchers may dwindle, the "influx of 'outsiders'" from other

disciplines noted by Chall (2: 6) in 1976 seems likely to continue. If this holds true, these specialists from the fields of cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics may both invigorate language arts research and compensate for the declining number of educational researchers.

The need for improved communication between researchers and practitioners in the language arts is currently widely recognized (1, 2, 3); it will become even more essential as specialists from other fields contribute to research in the language arts. This communication must proceed in both directions, however. Although few dispute the fact that research can be of genuine benefit to classroom teachers, it is also agreed that teachers must be able to borrow from and implement these findings critically and with discrimination. To attain the objective of improved communication between researchers and teachers, Calfee recommended that future research be carried out "in real schools," as a mutual commitment between researchers and the school community (1: 43). It may be hoped that those factors mitigating against the realization of this recommendation will ameliorate in the next few years as the advantages of on-site research become more widely recognized.

In regard to recommendations for future research in reading, Chall cautioned against the present trend toward great specificity in the testing and teaching of reading. Noting the elaborate reading systems developed by a number of basal publishers in the past several years, she asked, "Will there be a time in such a system for the children who work slowly to perhaps read a book and write a story?" (2: 11). Chall is not against the use of a management system per se; she is concerned, however, that the human element not be sacrificed to the massive record-keeping required in these basal reading systems.

Another recommendation for further study in the language arts, which is perhaps the broadest and most far-reaching, is this: that the language arts in general, and reading in particular, develop a judicious working relationship with linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, and most especially epistemology. For most of this century, reading and other educational researchers have attempted to achieve credibility and respectability by emulating the scientific paradigm; that is, by applying the inductive methods and techniques of the natural sciences —particularly physics—to problems of teaching and learning. This uncritical acceptance of what Medawar calls "the whole discredited farrago of inductivism" (6: 12) long prevented educational researchers in general, and reading experts in particular, from observing the great changes that were taking place in theoretical physics. With these new developments, in Levy's words, physics ". . . stepped beyond the world of absolutes into the speculative, integrating, subjective, holistic mode of knowing" (4: 47).

Levy's statement may be taken as a caution that scientific empiricism may not after all be well-suited to research in reading. It is hoped that this "specula-

tive" mode of knowing, with its roots deep in the rationalism of Plato, Descartes, and the Logical Positivists of the early 20th century (Whitehead, Russell, and Wittgenstein), may begin to exert a beneficial influence on future research in all of the language arts.

## A Final Note

We have several concerns for educational research in the next several years. On the whole, the short-term outlook is not as good as it was in the early seventies when the most recent ASCD language arts research monograph appeared. However, what actually happens in the next decade will depend on those who believe in the value of research. Each of us needs to strive to make certain that the next years will be productive in the field of the language arts. At the local school level, for example, we must attempt to convince policy makers of the need for and value of our research efforts. Prospective researchers, including those in classrooms as well as in graduate schools, need to be encouraged to conduct their studies. Responsible involvement in the process is a necessary ingredient if our profession is to retain its vitality.

Active participation in national organizations such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) may be one way to convince thoughtful colleagues, including policy makers, of the need for continued research support. Action programs designed to strengthen our working relationships with agencies that have the potential to support research will be critical, too. Finally, we must take advantage of each personal research opportunity—large or small, funded or not—if the next several years are to be rewarding ones.

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